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HUNTING FOR A FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER.

# WILD FLOWERS

AND

# WHERE THEY GROW

BY

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*SIXTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY MISS L. B. HUMPHREY*

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WILD
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and
WHERE THEY
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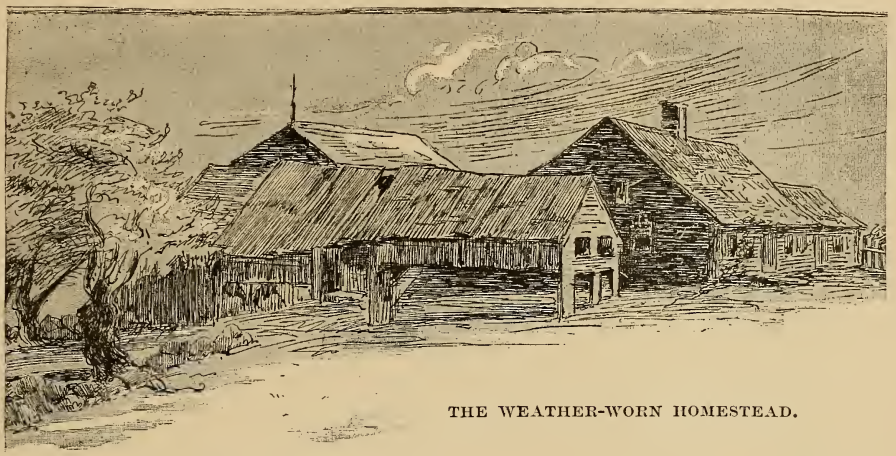


THE WEATHER-WORN HOMESTEAD.

# WILD FLOWERS OF SPRING.

DID you ever see a man or woman who was willing to forget the farm life they once knew and had a part in? The weather-worn homestead, the rambling barns and sheds — so many of them — with those dark corners and passage-ways, and stalls and pens for the cattle, and those haymows and lofts, the irregular garden, half given over to neglect, where hop-vines and currant-bushes, fruit-trees and vegetables, divided possession with the old-fashioned flowers our grandmothers took such pleasure in! The well, and the spring that fed it, the mossy stones over which those living waters went plashing and dancing! The apple-orchard; lovely acres of turf and trees; the home fields where the Indian corn grew, and in June the clover bloomed; the far-off meadow where the hay

was cut in August; the pasture, and the lane where the cows came up at night!

And did any one ever forget the wild flowers, and the places where they grew?

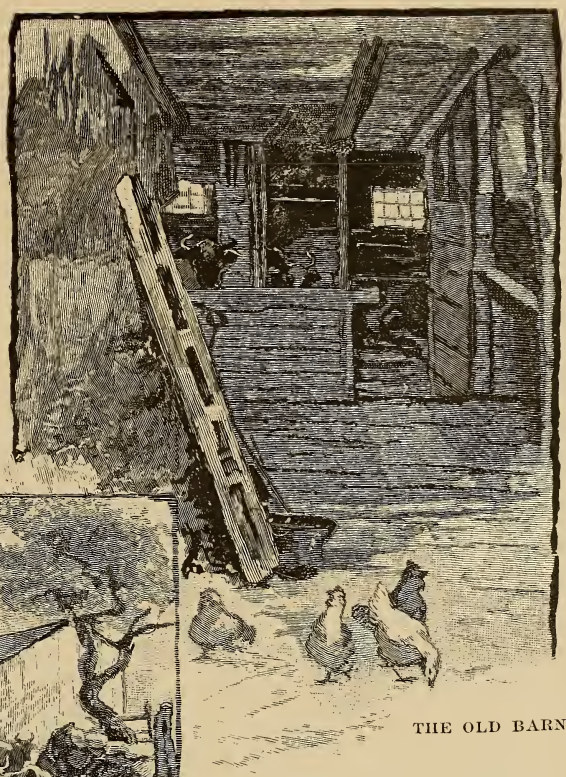
That means being nurtured in mother Nature's open ways, and knowing the wild, unpeopled places, the sweet solitudes, the breezy uplands. It means Saturday half-holidays — going a-Maying, going up the river, wading, following a brook, going off into the woods. It means a great deal of asking, "May I go?" — *somewhere.*

"MAY I GO?"

To us it meant expeditions to fields and pastures new, and a general exploring of wild regions, and a search for things that are difficult of access. We were not disobedient or vagrant, but adventurous and full of enthusiasm; and there was nothing we were afraid of; nothing that we did not dare to do.

It meant also certain spots where certain flowers were sure to be, for they or their kind had been there from our first remembrance. And there they are to this day, years and years after.

Duly as the time set for them in the order of the universe comes round, there they bloom, as if they had a part in the life that is immortal.



THE OLD BARN.

Wonderful persistence of a thing which seems so transient that you may count upon finding it in the selfsame spot for thirty years! It may be a trite thing to say, but it is none the less a matter worth thinking about, that when much that was thought permanent has perished, and a place once familiar is altered and

THE LANE THE COWS CAME UP.

strange, one can go to the old haunts and find the flowers he used to be fond of.

"No blank is left, no looking-for is cheated;
It is the thing we knew."

In the history of a company of Huguenots who settled on the southern frontier of Massachusetts, it is said that currant-bushes, cinnamon roses and asparagus may still be seen where two hundred years ago they had their garden.

It is about the same with some species of wild flowers where the land has not been disturbed by the plough. They refuse to be disinherited. And the loving earth takes solicitous care of them. I know a field which has been submerged by freshets, fed down and trampled upon by cattle, and put to every test of drowning or otherwise exterminating the roots of tender plants; but there every spring are little plats of houstonias. They never fail. I expect to see their sweet faces there as long as I live.

The pinkest and most fragrant May-flowers I ever saw, used to grow in the same place for I know not how many years. I could go to it blindfolded. Some red pasture lilies have survived a generation of human beings; and where scarlet columbines were to be seen as long ago as I can remember, scarlet columbines are growing to-day.

There is another fact more remarkable, which is that wild

flowers will *not* grow where there is every reason that they should.

Colonel Higginson says, "The longer one lives, the less rigid appear the rules and forms of external Nature; she seems to bid her wild flowers bloom where she will, and almost when she will, and to delight in setting at naught the most careful assertions of the botanists."

The moral of which is, that though one ought to study books closely, it is always best also to use one's own eyes.

He had been among the White Mountains, where he found flowers altogether out of season, and "meadow plants at an elevation of four thousand feet." And any one may have analogous experiences without going so far from home. The truth is, that wild flowers surprise us in many ways. Their times are like the movable feasts in the calendar, and there is no philosophizing about it. No rule of cause and effect will apply in some cases.

Topographically, how inconsistent they are! For example, we are too far north for the autumnal dandelion and the succory. Yet, if my eyes did not deceive me, I saw in August last year the very dandelion in blossom on the top of a mountain; and on the same day, a small company of the blue, beautiful succory flowers — two wanderers from "down country," whose seeds had either floated hither on the wind, or what is more likely, been brought by some migrating bird.

There are certain limits, beyond which, without apparent

reason, the wild roses do not stray. It is the same with the blood-root; if we want the pure white flowers with their wealth of golden stamens, we must cultivate them. Lupines are abundant in a pasture I know some miles from here, in no essential differing from our own; but not a curving spike of the violet-colored blossom adorns greensward of ours.

I know the locality of one, and only one, patch of bearberry, and one of the wax-wood, or climbing staff-tree, or, as it is oftener called, "bitter-sweet." The latter keeps close to a hollow by the side of the railroad, and is scorched every few years in the attempt to burn out the shrubbery which is inclined to encroach on that highway of the locomotive. At last, being warned, it has wandered under a fence, and by winding and clambering, as its way is, has managed to lose itself in some scraggy trees till the orange berries betray it in autumn.

Another rarity is the mountain laurel or broad-leaved kalmia, the *clamoun* of the Indians. "Calico-bush" is another name, and "spoon-wood," which, with the ingenuity characteristic of some people, has been made over so that it would not know itself into *spoon-hunch*. This laurel is a native of mountain regions, as may be inferred, and may be found all the way from Canada to Florida, from Maine to Ohio. Why, then, does not it grow plentifully for us? Mr. Emerson, in his book on the trees and shrubs of Massachusetts, speaks of a pasture where it makes such islets of bloom "crowned with white or rose-colored

THE SWAMP. — CATKINS, LIKE CATERPILLARS.

flowers," that it is a sight "worth going out of one's way to see."

It is a shrub which has roving kind of roots, yet it keeps pretty much to the same area in this one spot, when there is nothing in the loose soil to hinder its spreading. The question is, how came it just there, instead of being in any other sandy ground beside the road? And being there, the next question is, why does not it run along into the adjacent territory? Why should not there be laurel in all similar places as well?

## TRAILING ARBUTUS.

This darling of the spring is notoriously and provokingly uncertain in what botanists call its *habitats*. There are sections of country where it is not to be found, and where it cannot be made to live; and the curious part is, that there seems no reason for its likes and dislikes, for to all human appearance the conditions are about the same where it is and where it is not. It is not on account of dryness or dampness, sunshine or the lack of it, that it perishes. The thing is perverse. It will thrive, if it chooses, on a sterile knoll by some country road, or in a dark nook under the roots of a tree in a swamp.

Those very pink and very fragrant ones before referred to, inhabit the sunny side of a rock in a starved old pasture,

where there are not two inches' depth of soil for their roots. The leaves suffer from this sterility, and are dwarfed and rusty; but how intense, like a burning blush, is the rose-red of the clusters, and how spicily sweet they are! As if by some subtile processes known only in the alchemy of nature, such as bring the gold to the Indian-corn ears on the hillsides of New England, the senseless stone draws to itself, and imparts to the flowers, which adorn it, strength, beauty, sweetness and the flush of the morning.

THOSE VERY PINK AND VERY FRAGRANT ONES.

Another place where it comes early, and is one of the flower landmarks, is by the border of a sled-path that has for a score and more of years been kept passable through a wooded swamp, — *the* swamp of these papers. Long ago, two or three trees were cut down

just there, to furnish material for bridging over a wet spot, whose chances for letting a yoke of oxen down past extrication were, to say the least, rather threatening.

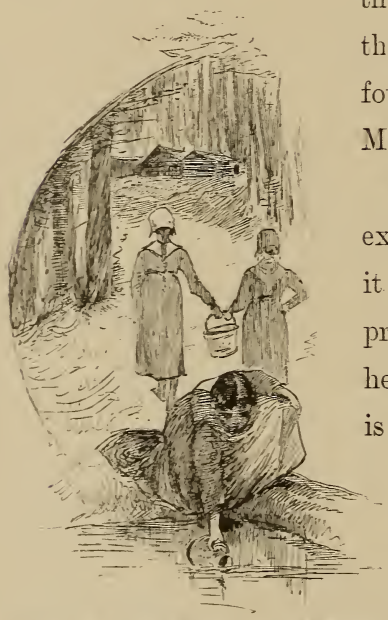
The opening thus made gave opportunity for the sun to shine in on a few feet of ground; consequently the snow went on the earliest thawing days; and there, if we could reach it through the slush and lingering drifts, we were sure of a handful of the first May-flowers. By that time there were maples in bloom, outlining themselves like trees on fire; and many willows and poplars were hanging out their catkins, like caterpillars, like tufts of gray wool, like soft, furry pussies, or, all in golden green, dropping dust of gold.

Those were white, perhaps on account of the soil and location. And so were the later ones of the swamp, which came on when "going a-Maying" had become one of the by-gones with everybody but ourselves. We used to pick them almost as late as June, growing out in sight above the leaves, in conspicuous trusses of snowy bloom almost as large as verbenas.

But after all, the true situation is, doubtless, just where Professor Gray says it is — in sandy woods in the shade of pines. Some such conditions must have been those on that Plymouth shore fronting the east, where our pilgrim fathers and mothers landed. Right in the midst of the first clearing where the two lines of log houses were built, was a spring,

bubbling up fresh and clear, from which the women dipped up water for household use. If you go to Plymouth now, and pass along Leyden street and up the hill, somebody will point out the spot.

The pine forest lay to the right and left, and stretched away behind the settlement in leagues of wilderness, full of perils from wild beast and murderous Indian. But around the cabins there were warm, sunny spaces; and there, as tradition runs, the women found flowers — trailing arbutus, the May-flowers.



RIGHT IN THE MIDST OF THE FIRST CLEARING.

They were the first to greet the exiles after that dreary winter. Was it not some compensation for the primroses and hyacinths under the hedgerows in dear, old England! It is pleasant to think of this bit of beauty in their lives. I know those women must have put them in some quaint mug or pitcher of Delft, and set them where the humble room could be made pleasanter for their sweetness and bloom. Perhaps the pilgrim daughters ventured to fix the clusters in their hair, as girls do now, or wear them on their bosoms. Let us hope

A PILGRIM DAUGHTER.

so. No strictness of training or objection to personal adornment could overcome a woman's love of flowers.

And sure we may be that the tenderly tinted, sweet-lipped arbutus blossomed on Rose Standish's grave, made so soon among the knolls where the hill slopes to the sea.

## THE GROUND-NUTS.

Close by that sunny nook in the swamp were knolls, crowded with the pretty things that flourish in rich leaf-mould. There was a little of every thing, like the evergreen blackberry vine, partridge-berry and checkerberry; all in unfading green, coming out fresh, moist and glossy from their chill bath of melted snow. And all the sod was shot through and through with goldthread. You could not turn up a morsel of it without laying bare those shining threads.

And there were little hummocks full of ground-nuts. Not the genuine ones flavored like cocoanut, but of an humbler sort. Very good, however, we young people thought them, and by no means to be disparaged now that we have grown older.

We had traditions about them, and traditions have always a fascination. We had read, in narratives about Indians, how some of the captives who made their escape, wandered back from Canada through the wilderness to their home in Massachusetts, "subsisting upon ground-nuts." And so these were

the nuts! And who knew but the route lay along this very way down to the valley of the Merrimack? — a suggestion that always thrilled us with the real "Indian story" thrill and made us look cautiously around.

And then how long could a famishing person live on ground-nuts no bigger than these? Above all, if it was so hard to get at them when the ground was bare, how could it have been done when the snow was deep? for it was always in the dead of winter that those events occurred. We had to work *so* hard for the dingy little tubers, bedded away down deep in the chocolate-colored mould at the end of a slim white stem; and when we thought we were sure of them, behold! the stem breaking off just at the critical moment, leaving behind, or below, to be dug for, the part good to eat.

In after years we were told that our ground-nut was properly the dwarf ginseng. Its flowers often came about the last of April, in constellations of tiny stars or graceful bunches of fine white points above a branchy circle of dull green leaves which were so sensitive that they were apt to wilt into rags if they were handled.

## HEPATICAS.

I shall never forget my first hepaticas and spring-beauties; no more than I shall that glorified hillside, under

the blazing mid-day sun, I first saw growing, and gathered dog's-tooth violets.

I should be sorry if I were not capable of enthusiasm over such beautiful things. It was to each of our flower-hunter's admiration and love without scientific knowledge. But there was ecstasy in the search and the finding. Our whole hearts were in it; and the feeling, the eagerness, the zest, we mutually shared.

Those special hepaticas were in a piece of woods to which everybody resorted who went Maying; because there, on a few acres of poor soil sprinkled over with reindeer moss, the arbutus grew in an almost inexhaustible quantity.

The hepaticas were discovered in a remote part, out of the way of the marauders; and their very inconspicuousness was the means of their preservation. They were in all the known colors — white, lavender, pink, and that blue which is like the blue of a baby's eye. All which we afterwards came to know about were out in open ground, and were white or pale blue. Only these, which never saw the sun, had such colors. They were in a dismal corner hanging to the north, as if exiled, shut away, kept by themselves. But something about the spot must have suited them; perhaps the bed of warm pine needles against which nestled the pretty cups full to the brim of tremulous stamens tipped with buff.

After the brief little life of the blossom was over, the leaves

had their day of loveliness. They started out immediately in mouse-color; and in their tender state were soft as fur of such small wild creatures as squirrel or mole. The leaf of this "noble liverwort," as old farmers call it, is one of the many which come under a rule of three. There are the tri-parted, tri-pinnated, tri-foliated,

and I know not how many forms of the trio arrangement. In this case they are lobes, whence its name, liver-leaf, from a fancied resemblance to that organ of the body.

## TRILLIUMS.

There are some well-known laws of odd numbers in nature. Botanists have found that all flowers are based upon a plan, and that, "next to five, the most common number is three." And there is infinite variety about those threes and fives and sevens.

THE RULE OF THREE.

Of all the threes, the goldthread with its lustrous yellow green leaves, and the trailer we call dewberry vine, or perhaps more properly the swamp blackberry, with its equally lustrous ones in purple green, are the most elegant.

Both are evergreens. You can always find them. I have often wondered that artists and designers should pass by such as these, to copy some exotic, like ivy or a fuschia. Our woods are full of most beautiful forms, in variety enough to satisfy the most exacting.

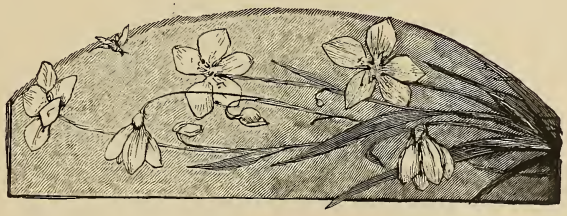
The goldthread leaf has a shape which deserves to be called "æsthetic." It is simply and exquisitely perfect in its curving outlines, its finish of fine notches, its gloss as if it had been varnished, and the way in which it is set on its stately little stem. After the petals have dropped off, the thread of a flower stalk may be seen for weeks lifting as high as it can the small frame-work which is left; precisely as one would carry aloft some emblem or transparency as he marched in a gala-day procession. I always think too of the cresset at the end of a pole which watchmen in the very olden time used to bear about to light the streets with.

The smiling wake-robin, or painted trillium, was an annual delight to us. That piece of cool green woods belonging to the swamp, which we haunted from the going of the snow till it came again, was full of it. In the distance, each solitary flower on its tall stem looked like a snow-white three-pointed star. It was only when one came near to it that the purple pencillings showed at the base of the petals.

The dark trillium, bath-flower, three-leaved night-shade, birth-root - - it has all these names, and more — comes later, is coarse

and rank, has immense, almost diamond-shaped leaves, smells ill, and has a strange color. Old-fashioned people in the country call it "squaw-flower;" and looking at it — a great overgrown, swarthy thing, in that peculiar sombre red, set off with the bone-white stamens, like barbaric ornaments — I can see a kind of rude fitness in the name. Others, with no reason that one can make out, call it "the Benjamin." These colloquial names for flowers are sometimes unaccountable, often absurd, but occasionally very pretty and appropriate. More or less of them will come to mind as the procession of the seasons moves along.

In an ancient country there would probably be some legend associated with these trilliums; for in the colored lines of one species there are those who would see a likeness to blood; while as for the other, it is most thoroughly ensanguined, an ominous red, of dye as deep as that gory spot on the hand of Lady Macbeth, which would not "out."



SPRING-BEAUTIES.

## THE SPRING-BEAUTY.

The first trees within sight from our house to show signs of spring are a line of willows a mile off. All at once, on some morning of a sunny April day, there is a faint tinge of what the old story-writers call "gosling green;" and that callow tint means that there will soon be wild flowers on a bit of meadow sheltered by those same willows. It is an early spot: a coppice of oak and other trees protects it on the north; the iron track of the railroad and an embankment, curve around the lower side where the sun shines all day; and at the west are those fantastic trunks and a hedge-row — a real hedge-row — which makes one think of England.

It is a famous covert for birds. When they make the mistake, which they often do, of arriving from the South too soon, they are sure to wait in that comfortable nook until it is time to see about building their nests.

And that is the earliest place to find a few of the first spring flowers, such as meadow-rue, houstonia, wind-anemone and violets. But I speak of it particularly on account of the spring-beauty. Somebody has described this dainty thing as "composed mostly of water," and as being "little more than a colored shadow." But that shadow is very pink, and distractingly pretty. If you look at it with a microscope, you will see that it is made of pink hair-lines on a ground of faint pink,

A LINE OF WILLOWS A MILE OFF.

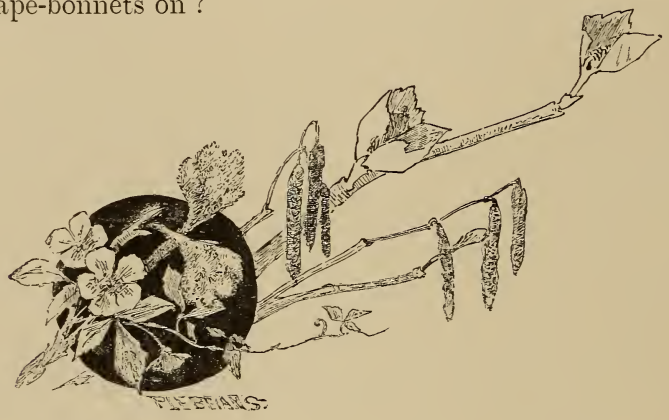
and dots of pink on almost invisible stamens — little bits of color, and minute proportions; but making a shape and flower presence incomparably lovely.

It is said that those pencilled lines on the petals are "honey guides for insects." But what a diminutive insect it must be, and what an infinitesimal morsel of honey that could be stored in a nectary which is such a mere speck of itself!

It certainly is the smallest spring-beauty that ever was seen. And all its parts are so fragile looking, its outlines so delicate! As a flower it is not so winsome as the Linnæa; but there is a character of unsubstantiality about the whole plant; the leaf and stem are almost as bodiless as the blossom. The perfection in every part, the completeness, the matchless finish, are what make it so unique. And then the suppleness, the very air of it, so blithe and debonair! that is what one can never too much admire. The stalk looks hardly stout enough to bear its own weight, but it supports the two slim green leaves, the tiny green vase which holds the flower, and a whole cluster of buds on their threads of stems. And there it sways, like a child on the spring and all a-tiptoe to be gone.

How natural it is to associate flowers with human beings, or to liken them to some one we know! I am sure you must have seen many a dear old grandmother in a much-ruffled night-cap, who made you think of a hollyhock. There are faces with such broad, beaming good-will in them, they are

so round and so cheery, that they seem to have the day's brightness in them, like the sunflower. Is not the arbutus like the sweetest maidenhood, like Shakespeare's Miranda? And is not the white lily like some noble woman you honor? And what are sweet-peas but a flock of little school-girls with their cape-bonnets on?



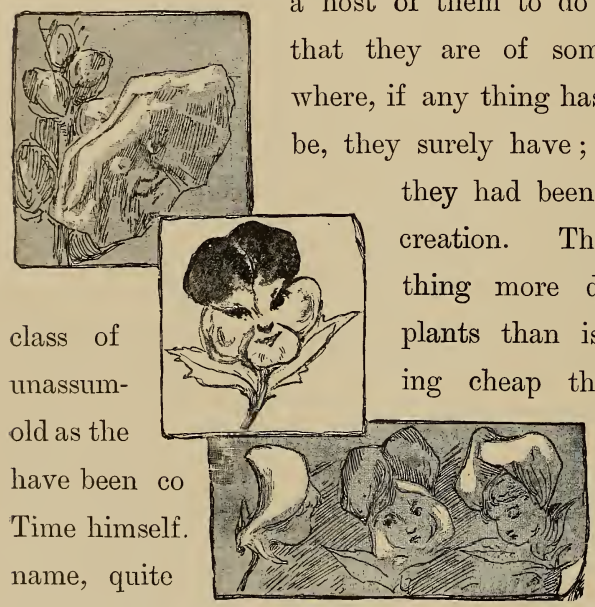
It was down there that we used to find the "Dutchman's breeches," a poor relation of the stately, blue-blooded *Dicentra spectabilis*, or bleeding-heart. The little Dutchman long since disappeared, nor have we ever since been able to get on his track. But though not of high rank, his oddity was really a charm; and if one but examined the attire, which seemed dingy at a distance, it was found to be white, tipped with cream-color. The stuff was genuine.

There is no flower without beauty of some kind to one who has eyes to behold it. If not in general effect, in outline or

color, then in delicacy of tissue, perhaps, or peculiar arrangement of stamens and pistils, the form of the calyx, or the seeds; *something* to be admired, like the mutilated dead dog of Oriental fable, in whom the crowd could see nothing to praise until there came along one who said, "Behold! his teeth are whiter than pearls."

If there are any plebeians in the vegetable world — and did not Linnæus speak of the grasses in that way? — we can find them by the side of the highway, and under foot in our door-yards. We might call the little speedwells so. Everybody knows these simple, lowly plants, with the very small spikes of blue and white flowers, and the tiny, thyme-like leaves. They live contented lives, and do all they can with their frugal resources to make waste places attractive. And the poor mallows, with its numerous family, and little "cheeses," would come into the list. Is there any one who does not know, and who has not eaten, those slippery, meaty "cheeses"? Perhaps the cheerful cinque-foil, blossoming anywhere and everywhere, a brave, bright yellow disc like a tiny sun-face, from June till almost November, may be a plebeians. Perhaps, too, the rabbit's-foot clover, soft, furry, daintily tinted, but too common and in colors too obscure. But certainly the poverty-stricken tribe of mouse-ear everlastings; probably not one person in a hundred who walks over them ever notices these jolly paupers, unless it is in a general way, in early spring,

when their woolly heads, specked with purple, give a faint tinge to the worn-out pastures and sterile fields which they inhabit. When every thing is so bare and so gray, before the grass has started, they assert their personality, though it takes a host of them to do it. Then they show that they are of some use in the world, where, if any thing has gained a right to be, they surely have; for they look as if they had been in it ever since the creation. There never was any thing more distinctive about any class of plants than is the case with these unassuming cheap things; they look as old as the hills; they might have been coeval with Father Time himself. There is a common name, quite suitable, of "pussy's foot," from the cushion-like divisions before the flower expands; and a local one, not so easily accounted for, of "ladies'-tobacco."



FOLKS, OR FLOWERS?

## SPICE-BUSH AND CASSANDRA.

After May has fairly come, and days begin to grow longer and warmer, how fast the flowers press along! One must go

often to their haunts, or something will have bloomed and passed away. We had been many times to the swamp where it grows, before we ever saw the fever-bush in blossom. And then we did not recognize it till we had bitten the aromatic bark, and tasted the pungent flavor, which gives it its other names of spicewood and benzoin — making one think of the Orient, and the Old Testament days when caravans went laden with odoriferous things whereof incense for the temples was made. It has another name of wild allspice, and is also known as "Benjamin-bush." We could not find out the origin of this last. Somebody ought to hunt up the plant-lore of New England, and see where some of our quaint names came from.

The flourishing little benzoin is gay with honey-yellow flowers before the leaves are formed; and they tassel out so liberally along the branches that the bush looks, as you see it amidst its gray surroundings, as if it were done in gilt. Thoreau speaks of a "lit tree:" this is a "lit" bush, glinting as it might if the sunshine touched it while every thing else was left in the shade.

For years we failed of seeing the cassandra, or leather-leaf, in bloom. It is one of the andromeda family, and comes on late in April, or early in May, when the small, egg-shaped, white flowers appear in a row, like lilies-of-the-valley, along the rusty leaves. They are slightly fragrant, and as pretty as they can be. They are so young and the bush so hoary, that

it is like the contrast of a child's face with one in old age.

## WHITE THINGS.

While one stays away, how wonderful the transformation that takes place! The flowers are so many! They bloom so lavishly, in such affluence, such prodigal bounty, such spendthrift waste!

And not only in frequented places, but where people never go. In swamps inaccessible; deep in the passes of the silent hills. In forests which only wild creatures traverse; under the shadow of lonely mountains. The hermit thrush, the foxes and the eagle, know their secret haunts.

Sufficient in Nature's bounteous goodness, they grow up in quietness and freedom to fulfil their lives in content. They are a part of the earth's garniture of beauty. They are the darlings she cherishes. They have waited long down in darkness under the snow which has housed them in warmth and security; but now nothing can keep them back.

They come from their secluded cells, and are for the most part like pale nuns. Many of the earliest of the New England wild flowers (and it is central New England, or a little to the north of it, where this is written) are almost vestal in

THEY BLOOM SO LAVISHLY.

their purity. They have a chilliness of aspect compared with the fervid dyes of regions further south.

But what they lack in color is more than made up by the ineffable delicacy of the tints and shadings, the exquisite shapes, and the endless diversity in stamens and pistils.

And then the aroma of our arbutus — what can surpass it? And the fine fragrance of the later Linnæa, and the balsam of the partridge-berry? Each one of these has a perfume as distinctively its own as tuberose or jasmine, while it is subtler, more delicate, and never oppressive. The sweet odor of the early New England wild flowers belongs with the crystalline blueness of the spring sky and the freshness of dewy mornings, when it seems as if the world had but just been newly made, and it is such a joy to be alive and have a part in it.

How many kinds of white there are! One might run over every thing that can be thought of in comparison, and there would be found a flower to match it. White as milk, as snow, as ivory. The whiteness of a pearl, of silver, or of white wax, or of wool, or swan's down, or a boll of cotton as it is bursting open and showing its fleecy fibre.

If one could group all the spring flowers together that are called white, no two would prove to be of exactly the same shade or quality. The petals of the goldthread are of creamy richness. The smiling wake-robin has a bluish cast.

The mitrewort is like frosted silver. The cassandra is opaque and waxen. The chick winter-green whose pretty star spangles the earth, is of immaculate purity. The hobble-bush is dead white, the chokeberry roseate. The bell-worts are tinted like a tuberose. The dwarf cornel (bunchberry) has a tinge of palest sea-green; the small white violet is pearl color. Trailing arbutus is of the purest flesh tones, like the clear, fair complexion of a sweet young girl, just flushed like the petals of a damask rose; and the wood anemone is suffused with a blush that seems to go and come with every motion, till the wind has wrought its ruin, and nothing remains of its evanescent beauty except the stamens with their dots of yellow and the trim green pistil down in their midst.

The "bluets" have, as the word denotes, a hue of azure. Not many are the flowers so favored with names as this golden-eyed darling of the pastures and fields. In botanical nomenclature, it is *Houstonia cærulea*, to honor Dr. Houston, an English botanist, and because it is of such heavenly blue when it opens. With the Philadelphians it is "Quaker-bonnet" — they could think of nothing else so coy and so bewitching to call it by. Again it is "Venus-pride," and "dwarf-pink." It is "innocence," for reasons that need no comments. And finally, it is "fairy flax," fit for elfin spinning and daintiest fabric for the queen of the fairies to wear.

THE WILDING APPLE-TREE.

## FRUITY FLOWERS.

All the berry and fruit-bearing vines, bushes, brambles and trees put on white or roseate white in their blooming, as if there were no other color known. What rule is it that governs them? What is the chemical agency which works in the sap of a raspberry spray, a white-thorn, a strawberry vine and an apple-tree, that they should have this in common?

The very shape of the blossom looks fruity. Nearly all, with the exception of the blueberry, have petals that shed, and a generous supply of stamens, promising of bountiful results.

How profuse, too, the inflorescence! There comes a time, just as June is crowding close on May, when the whole country over it is like fairy-land. Orchards are coming into bloom, and the wilderness and waste places are made glad. In neglected corners of fields, along railroad-tracks, on the sides of old worn-out pastures, and where new growths have sprung up since a piece of cleared land has been burned over, it is just the same — there is largess of bloom and leafery.

Who ever suspected until then, who would have believed, that there were so many wilding apple-trees? Those snowy drifts in barren spots are only the poor thorn-trees, the

white thorn, the scarlet fruited thorn; in spring such a white wonder; in October, transfigured again, till it is all one burning red with the mealy pear-shaped fruit, which stays on amidst the sharp-set environment when not a leaf is left.

All the rest of the fleecy, feathery loveliness is wrought by the despised wild-cherry trees, of the kind which bears the small, acid, red fruit so tempting to children and birds. There is nothing too delicate, too graceful, too snowy-pure, to compare them with. They have the airiness of plumes. They look soft as foam. They appear ready to float off as clouds do, or mist.

### THE WAYFARING TREE.

To the early spring belongs the showiest shrub of northern woods, the hobble-bush, or "wayfaring tree," so called, perhaps, from a vagrant habit it has of spreading its lithe, withy branches off till they touch the ground, where they strike root, and then start on again. It is a sort of traveller to a limited extent; perpetuating itself, as a banian does, though not after the banian model. If the writer who asks the question,

> "Wayfaring tree! what ancient claim
> Hast thou to that right pleasant name?"

"WAYFARING TREE! WHAT ANCIENT CLAIM
HAST THOU TO THAT RIGHT PLEASANT NAME?"

had lifted one of these reaching arms, he would have found the answer. But he must have been right in saying that a poet gave it:

"Whate'er it be, I love it well;
A name, methinks, that surely fell
From poet, in some evening dell,
Wandering with fancies sweet."

It is in every sense a wonder-bush. First, the flowers start magnificently, in immense flat cymes. If I should say that they covered a space as large as a dinner-plate, it would not be so very extravagant, such an outrageous exaggeration. Many of the component parts, the small ivory-white wheels, fail of perfecting themselves; but the general effect is grand in spite of it. Those plats of white make great moony spots in the green dimness and distance; and seen at dusk of evening, they have a weird phantom pallor, quite startlingly suggestive of ghostly faces.

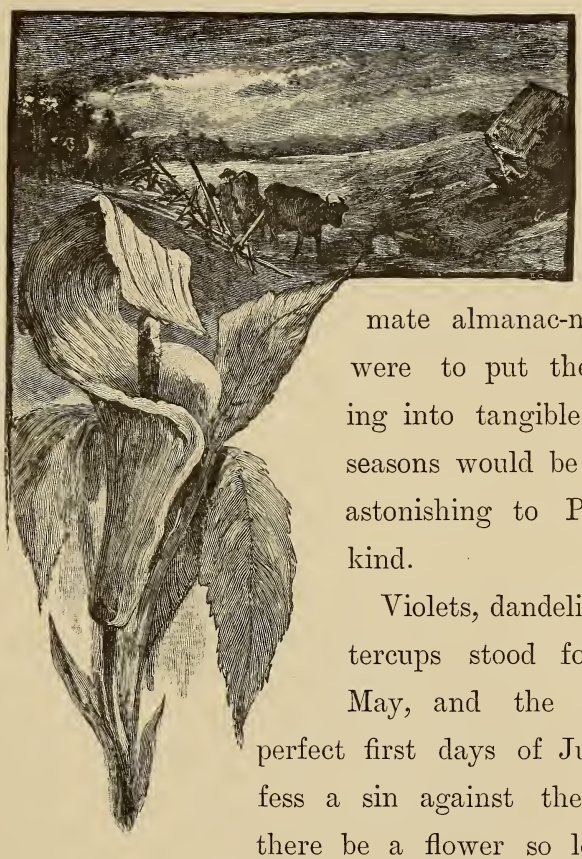
Then the leaves sometimes measure six or eight inches across, are handsome in form, corded, and till autumn comes, of a most brilliant green. When they turn — what alchemy in their juices! — they glow with the deepest, richest, winiest red. The woods seem warmer for the very sight of them.

Meanwhile, there have been berries, in large clusters as

conspicuous as the flowers were; their color a blackish crimson, and their shape like apples, with just such a stem and shrunken calyx as apples have. They look like little Baldwin apples massed in a generous bunch, as many as your hand can hold. And the question every one asks, seeing them all along the mountain-roads in August and September, is, "Are they good to eat?"

The answer we heard an old woman make, was, "They were good to eat when I was a child."

# WILD FLOWERS OF SUMMER.



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.

FLOWER hunters quite unconsciously go by calendars of their own, wholly independent of legitimate almanac-makers; and if they were to put their modes of reckoning into tangible shape, the times and seasons would be marked off by tokens astonishing to Poor Richard and his kind.

Violets, dandelions, cowslips and buttercups stood for those last days of May, and the long, beautiful, blue, perfect first days of June. I stop to confess a sin against the violet — how could there be a flower so lovely, and fragrance be left out? It is unpardonable; and, as Fanny Kemble declared when she flung one away in a rage,

"The thing's totally unnatural." Delicate yellow ones, blues of so many varieties, sizes and shades, and all so generous with their beauty, so contented in every place, and so admired — and the one crowning grace and charm is not there.

All the sweetness of our violet tribe, which is so numerous that the earth is blue by reason of it, both the dry land and the wet, is in the little white one, with the fine streaks of purple and heart of gold. Bonny wee thing down in the wet! What a dearling it is, so sweet, and shy, and pure! I would rather give all the others up, heavenly blue and all, than that this least among them should not be.

Has any one, I wonder, ever classed and enumerated the blues of violets? I am sure it must have taken all the words that ever represent blue. They are sapphire, azure, cerulean. They are turquoise, they are amethystine. They are like the blue ether; like blue precious stones; like eyes of blue. They pale into lavender; they darken to purple. We knew of a place where there were varieties in sky-blue with purple streaks; in deep violet striped with a lighter tint; in palest blue, with heavy shadings; and some that lacked but little of being red.

It was on a meadow where we used to go after cowslips, as we and everybody called them, though marsh-marigold is the correct name. At that time of the year a brook slipped along the "run" which was midway of that bit of lowland.

IN THE TIME OF VIOLETS.

By mid-summer it was all dried up, but at the season of so many flowers, we had to go over shoes in the clear, cold water to get at those cups of shining gold. What a vision of the new summer those almost dazzling "runs" and meadows were, when the cowslips, and after them the dandelions and buttercups, were out! A symphony, as modern artists would say, in gold and green! Oh, those superb long bright afternoons, when we saw acres of emerald-green meadow, set as thick as stars are in the sky, with dandelions and buttercups; blazing with sunshine, as if they had caught something of his glory in their cups and discs!

It was as if the spoils of an Alexander or Cæsar had been spilled where they marched on their home-coming from some victorious campaign; or as if some lavish hand had scattered, broadcast, coin of the realm.

But the good dames whom we sometimes saw out gathering the "cow*slops*," as they would have it, saw only in these auriferous balls something for the dinner-pot. To us they were riches and glory; to them, only "greens."

The word cowslip, we were informed, was from the Saxon *cuslippa*, because cows delight in them, and from a likeness to the lips of a cow; but the last seems without sense. There is an old name of "blay-blobs," and "blow-blobs." "*Blay*" may by some elasticity be made to stand for a wet place; and "*blob*" is a bladder. The flower, and also the bud, being so round,

there is significance in it. Another quaint, half-obsolete name is "mare-blob," from the Saxon "*mere*," a marsh. The Anglo-Saxons were apt to give idiomatic definitions to things. There is a crispness, vigor, precision and directness in their words. They may not go "trippingly on the tongue," they may not be musical to the ear; but they are forceful and to the purpose.

### SQUAW-PLANTS AND PURPLE AVENS.

I have sometimes wondered if all the young folks used to do just those same things we did — if they too played at curling dandelion stems into rings; holding buttercups under one another's chins, "to see if you love butter;" pulling clover-heads to pieces for the sip of honey down in the purple nectaries; striking rose-leaves against their foreheads, to hear the popping sound as the petals burst; making baskets of burdocks; picking open pansies, to see the old woman who sits inside washing her feet

All these things, as with mutual understanding, I suppose they did And did they not make chains of bulrushes; and daisy chains; and pick out the savory seeds from the heads of that dear New England bush, the sweet fern? And did they not hunt for four-leaved clovers (older folks do that!), from some belief, transmitted as mysteriously as

A SYMBOL IN GOLD AND GREEN.

Free Masonry, that good luck will come with the finding? And did they not make thistle-balls and festoons of oak leaves? And what country child is there who does not know by actual proof what a pleasant acid the tender beech-leaves have? And was there ever one among them who has not been off in early summer after "young ivory?"

"ONLY GREENS!"

I used to think *that* such an unaccountable name for checkerberry. Why was it "ivory," unless from the stupid, blundering misnomer of some ignorant person? And, after all, to learn that "ivory plum" (for a plain enough reason) was an accredited name, as much so as "wintergreen," "box berry," "partridge-berry" or "mountain tea"—all of which belong to the spicy, glossy-leaved, familiar favorite of our childhood.

With us as small folks, and then as growing up (for these papers represent many years of rambling), the love amounted

to a passion — perhaps I have said that before. Nothing in the shape of a flower failed of some attraction for us, with the one exception of that odious abomination of the smilax family known as the "carrion-flower." Even that we brought home as an anomaly among plants, and then rejected it in disgust.

Nothing grew in too tangled or muddy or dangerous a place to deter us from getting it. We went down into ditches after the little lavender-colored speedwell, and dared malevolent poisons to pluck the small-flowered crowfoot, and those gorgeous chrysanthemum-like clusters which we learned to know as the golden ragwort, or "squaw-weed."

The squaws, let me say, have been well perpetuated in the floral world; in a flower, a weed, a root and a berry; namely, the dark trillium (before mentioned), this golden blossom, the partridge-berry (*Mitchella*), and one of the odd parasites of the broom rape kind. And very likely there are many more that are named for the dusky women of the wigwams. I must not omit the cohosh, which keeps up the memory of the Indian baby as "pappoose-root."

Two of the most barbaric things were the purple avens and the swamp saxifrage. The first is a flower within a flower, with red, hairy, pointed petals, or sepals, or members of some sort, like the ears of a fawn; then a cream-colored cup; then more surroundings and hooked things; and inside of all, a bundle of green fibres tipped with gold. And what is true

"DO YOU LOVE BUTTER?"

calyx, or what flower part, no one but a botanist can tell. It stays like this for a long time, changing at last to a cone; and when the seed arrangements have matured, it is a bristling purple ball.

The avens is not handsome, but singular, rich, outlandish, complex. Red leaves, red flowers, red stems, even the underground parts are that same tawny red, as if the very sap in its veins was drenched in color. It is said that the roots taste of clove.

Of course we dug down to ascertain. I am reluctant to say that one of our number was ready to taste of almost anything; wisely refraining, however, when it came to Jack-in-the-pulpit, which has a bulbous root of the kind called a "corm," so like a certain garden esculent that it has another name of "bog onion." Being warned that whoever bit into this fierce burning "dragon-root" would wish more and more that they had not, we let it alone.

In our pursuit of knowledge, we dragged to light the turnip at the end of the painted trillium; and we solved the mystery of the Solomon's seals, and saw the sign of that monarch's imprint on the horizontal roots.

The swamp saxifrage, which grew where the avens did, is even more bizarre when put to a microscopic test. Seen thus, it might pass for a specimen of Japanese high art; or the head of a Japanese lady, dressed after the similitude of

a cushion, set off with knots of ribbon and stuck full of red-headed pins. It is considered a very homely species, but under a magnifying glass it is ornate as an Eastern pagoda. There is a wonderful amount of filigree work, carving, small samples of fine sculpture, pretty models and dainty devices on a miniature scale in flower mechanism, if one will just take the trouble to examine.

## "WHAT YE GOT NOW?"

The farmers who saw us "forever lugging home a lot of stuff" used to look at us admiringly, on account of our indefatigable perseverance; and they thought we were of the "right sort," though what was it "good for," they'd like to know. One man used to call out "*Weeds! weeds!* And you are all burnt up!"

Another would come out of his house, and, stooping down over our baskets to see what the contents were, ask, his face brimming over with curiosity and kindliness, "What ye got now?"

Some of the people thought we must be getting things "to make beer of," or were gathering "greens." And one old man stopped us and told us what everything we had was "good for." We should never have rheumatism if we ate this. That was good for fever. If we followed his

directions we should be saved from all ills. He was as wise as the "Indian doctors" whom the country places used to know. He talked about the flower called "high pride," and the smaller which was "low pride," and showed us what "cohosh" was, and "wickabee" — Indian names.

If we heard of a new plant (that is, new to us), we set out in search of it. And, depend upon it, if you are determined to find a thing, you will. It was often our chief perplexity to ascertain what the name was. Sometimes, in our inquiries, we would stumble upon some vernacular that was curious or pretty. For instance, sarsaparilla was pettimorrel; clintonia was "heal-all;" lady's-slipper was "Noah's ark."

Usually, however, we received for answer, "Oh, that is some kind of a river weed." "*That*, that is *brook greens*." One man scrutinized a flower we showed him, and then answered, as one having authority, "That is a plant which has no name;" and we feigned satisfaction.

"The name! the name!" was what we harped upon, as Shylock did upon "the bond." We partly analyzed and partly guessed; groped in the dark, made many blunders, and often were very, very wide of the truth; eventually coming slowly to that little, absurdly "little learning" which is such an unsatisfying thing.

But guessing is not knowing. Resemblance does not nec-

essarily prove anything in botony. How good and how comfortable *certainty* is!

We had at last a helper in a born botanist. True, he was sixty miles off; but the "weeds" went in the mail-bag, with an interrogation point after the name if we were slightly in doubt, an exclamation point if we were very much so. And they came back labelled aright. And those were days of mutual congratulation, when we could put our fingers on something and say we had learned a fact. It was not much, but yet a great deal to us, that the little we knew — we *knew*, or trusted we did.

It was an event when we found the tall anemone, and ascertained which was the bulbous crowfoot; and that the thinly rayed flower as common as dandelions was the daisy flea-bane. A little creeper by the wayside, which has so fine a stem and leaf, and tiny lavender-red cup, was the spurry sandwort. We had fondly believed in it as a pimpernel. We had so declared it; for did it not open at seven o'clock in the morning, and close by half-past two? And on cloudy days did it not stay shut? And if that did not answer to the description of "poor man's weather-glass," then what did?

No doubt these details seem absurd, and quite too personal; but they were red-letter days to us, illuminated days on which they happened. Such was that on which we brought

"WHAT YE GOT NOW?"

home the "golden Alexanders" (what an imperial sound! — meadow-parsnips, if you wish for a more commonplace name), and knew that these corymbs of intensest yellow, shedding powder of gold over our hands, were really lawfully entitled to that exalted appellation. Such was that when we saw our first white saxifrage on the ledge; and when, after much vain searching, but holding to our faith that they must be somewhere, if we only knew, we found the primrose-colored violets.

## THE DOG'S-TOOTH VIOLET AND RED COLUMBINE.

We went a long distance to see the dog's-tooth violets, under a blazing noon-day sun in June. They are due in May; but these were when days are long and hot. We had had a large bunch sent to us — sixty by count — with word that we should find them in such a place, that they shut up towards night, but about eleven in the forenoon would be wide open.

Yes; there they were: the whole lower portion of a bluff, sloping to the east, by a meadow, was lighted with them. I could not have imagined such glory possible to the flower.

But it is no more a violet than a tulip is, or a rose. The root is a bulb; very, very deep in the earth. From it rises one smooth stem, bearing a pair of handsomely mottled, long, lanceolate-elliptical leaves, shining on the under side, and on

the upper of a mealy green blotched with purple. Above there is the one flower, a spreading yellow lily, veined with brown, and supposed to bear at the base marks as if a dog had bitten a piece out — whence the name. Another which it is known by is adder's tongue.

We were sometimes fortunate enough, as in this case, to see certain of the short-lived flowers in masses. Once it was the clintonia, which is another of the always graceful lily shapes. It is very common in the cool moist woods, where its silvery-lined clean green leaves, of the form of the lily-of-the-valley, are always noticeable. The flowers are in a profuse cluster, buff and delicate. One day in June we saw so many of them on a piece of low land that they made patches of color variegating the green as if pale sunlight were touching it here and there.

And we knew a pasture hollow, divided by an old board fence, where the ground was red with columbines. All in scarlet and yellow, on their branchy stems, how they nodded and swayed in the gay June breeze!

I shut my eyes and see again that rocky hollow, with the hedge-crowded fence where a thrush was building her nest; the banks silvered with mitrewort just beginning to fade; the cnshions of moss; the clustering maiden-hair fern; and the dashing red of the columbines.

They bloomed on and on, as if their resources were without

WHERE THE GROUND WAS RED WITH COLUMBINES.

limit; and time and again we took the long tramp to look at them, just as we would go to see a friend. And always we ended by bringing home our arms full — for nobody else cared for them — and roots to set out in the garden.

## JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.

They had for a neighbor in the ravine back of them, a Jack-in-the-pulpit, who had either strayed away from his own people, or been left behind. In later years the number increased, but at first there was only one. The ravine, which was the bed of a spring water course, grew up to bushes, was partially cleared of them and grew up again; but through all these vicissitudes, Jack never failed. We went every summer to hunt him up, and there was a real zest in doing it.

It is a piece of floral necromancy which brings him up out of the ground to his perch: who could foretell it, not knowing? A starchy turnip down out of sight, so biting in its fiery juice that it has the name of dragon-root; a pair of coarse tri-foliate leaves with an ensheathed something between them bound tight as a mummy. Watch these closely. The next thing — lo! our old acquaintance, Jack! He has been evolved out of — what? But any way, there he is "peart" and eager, up on the stool from which he can just see over the screen in front of him. His head is sheltered by the

leaf which looks so like the sounding-board above the pulpit in some very old-fashioned meeting-houses. It is a rather overpowering canopy, in stripes of greenish-white alternating with red-bronze, bright and shining; but, like everything else about him, it is worth looking at.

By and by, in place of his stool will be a heap of something like little white stones, like a cairn. It is his cairn — all that there is above ground to show where he stood. Some day in September, in your strolls up the ravine, you will come across a cone of scarlet berries. They hold the juice and the vigor of the dragon-root.

But the idyl of his life is over, finished. Jack, his desk and his sounding-board, have long since vanished. Yet he held his post faithfully, this little preacher. Many a day, while the flowers of spring were fading, he stood on his high place where he could look off and see all that was going on — green things growing, mists gathering on the hills, birds making their nests, the sun rising and setting, and children driving home the cows at night.

## THE PASTURE.

The place we had most to do with was "The pasture." To account for our love for it, I must begin at the beginning.

Some men are never satisfied till they own a piece of land. They may be so situated that they have no use for it, and they may have to make some sacrifice to obtain it, yet the desire is too strong for them. They are not easy until they have a field, or a pasture, or what New Englanders call a "lot," of some kind, some "real estate" that is their own.

And a right good feeling it is, whether in man or woman; a natural, true instinct for our dear old mother earth, for outward life, for the trees and grass that will grow for you, for the wild flowers and the birds that will make your small portion of the globe their home. And they will all help to your purest pleasures, and become a part of your own being.

When the world was new, the dwellers therein loved the soil. These whom I am speaking of are their lineal descendants in more senses than one; and so the yearning which overmasters them can be accounted for.

For such a reason the pasture (as if there was but one) was of great interest to us. It was called an "old" one when we first knew it; and it had traditions. An almost forgotten settler had owned it, together with two fields in which he had set out apple-trees — building in one a house, not a trace of which now appears except the depression in the turf where the cellar was.

The pasture bordered on the road for a few rods only, and all the rest extended in a rambling way back of the fields,

and off till it met the tracts of other proprietors. So much of it was growing up to wood that it was called timber-land, leaving open spaces enough, however, for two cows to get a living there. It had groves of oaks, maples, pines, and large solitary trees, which no axe was allowed to touch — left to stretch their broad arms and furnish a generous shade such as cattle seek when the sun is hot.

It had knolls fragrant with sweet fern; its surface was broken by boulders, bossed with gray-green lichens. Here and there out of the short grass showed ledges, whose fissures were adorned with mosses in helmet and hood of scarlet; and around their warm basses ripened the largest checkerberries, and sometimes a few bunches of strawberries, of flavor most delectable — the condensed aroma of strawberry was in them.

No monotony in that pasture, with its ups and downs, its slopes and hollows. It was sterile in some parts, luxuriant in others; open, shaded, dry, wet; a warm wood at the east, and a cold one at the north; home of many wild flowers.

And there was one exotic, a sweet briar — the eglantine of the poets. It was like a bit of romance to see it there; to touch the leaves and make them give out that bewitching fragrance; and each June to gather the lovely single roses, whose perfume is the purest attar, and whose petals are so deftly tipped and tinted with carmine. How it came there no one knew; but we liked to think that the young wife of the

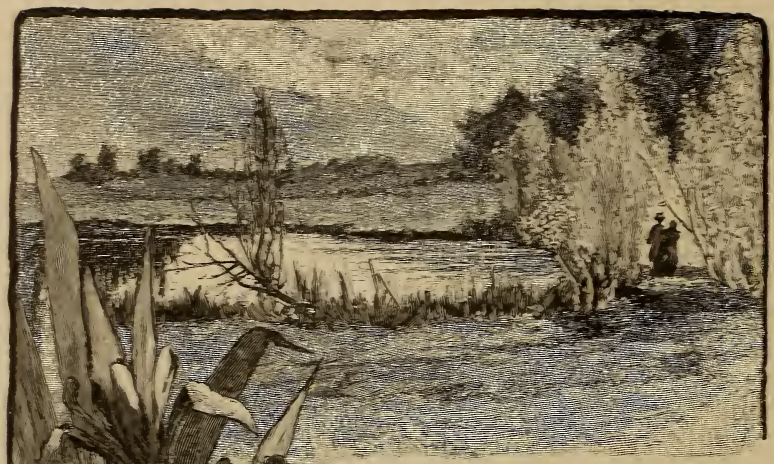
EGLANTINE.

settler had brought a slip from her home in the old colony, and set it out in the clearing in the wilderness.

The pasture had several small bogs where were bulrushes and flags, and the sphagnum moss was so rank that you sank into it ankle deep. Yellow water lilies grew in two of them, and button-balls, and the cotton-grass, whose airy tufts caused the places to look in September as if a flurry of snow had fallen. It had reedy pools between little grassy hummocks skirted with hardhack, and there bloomed the exquisite flowers of the blue flag. And there was a lovely, cool green hollow, which had a season of special beauty when the crimson whorls of the sheep-laurel ("lamb-kill") made it like a rosy festival time.

A grassy road wound from the pasture bars, by many a turn, away down to the swamp from whence the winter supply of wood was drawn. Always under the shade of trees and through pleasant places went this sled-path, bordered by berry-spotted banks and knobs of gray granite cushioned with moss.

Following it, or going a little away from it, one could always find abundance of flowers. The blue-eyed grass grew in it, the silvery cinque foil, violets and dwarf-evening primrose, wild strawberries, and three kinds of everlasting, the small purple milk-wort, the blue lobelia such as the Indians are said to have used for tobacco, gold-thread and fringed



BLUE-FLAG.

polygala, dwarf cornel and starwort, arbutus and the least Solomon's seal, and many more.

LIZARDS.

At the north lay the great undrained area fed by hidden springs, which was the home of so many water-loving and shade-loving things. For trees, the canoe birch, the yellow and the black (which has the glossy bark so aromatic, which children, and older folks too, like to nibble), scarlet maple, different species of poplar, ash and willows, hemlocks, spruces, hornbeams, and I know not what,

made in summer a darkling shade. At other times of the year it was open enough and sunny in patches.

It was secluded, but to us never lonesome. We haunted it at all seasons except when winter snows made it impenetrable; even then we followed the sled-path. We loved it as the solitude-seeking thrushes did, whose notes of thrilling sweetness we used to hear towards the close of day. It was there that we found our one oven bird's nest, and the nest of the hermit thrush.

And we had two experiences not so agreeable. The swamp was carpeted with lush mosses of many kinds. Besides the tufted sphagnum which grew right in the water, the feathery moss of satin sheen on the dryer hummocks, the dark pickle-green sort such as we see on the stones that surround a well, and the little tree shapes like a date-palm, there was a great deal of a lovely variety outlined like a fern and delicate as lace, in an exquisitely filmy tissue of fibres.

This last grew in great mats so closely woven that we could bring away, without breaking it apart, all we could pile on our arms, taking it up and rolling it together like a rug. Unfortunately for us, these snug beds afforded a retreat for lizards. Now lizards are secretive; and, naturally enough, they kept concealed till we had reached home and began to pull apart the moss to arrange it in trays. Then, oh, horror! out slid the slippery, stealthy, olive-green crea-

tures and went gliding about the rooms up-stairs and down till they fairly pervaded the house.

Another time — it really seems as if we ought to have been suppressed — we brought home "newts," as people call them, in the same way. If it was not the truth, I should not tell such a thing — it was almost as bad as Frank Buckland, with the frogs and snakes in his pockets. Yes, there they were — the little orange-red lizards, which John Burroughs says are salamanders; and he declares that they are harmless. But think of our disgust and dismay when, on unloading our mosses (this time in the dooryard), they came forth, and went — somewhere; where, we did not wait to see.

### IN THE SWAMP.

Between the knolls in the dryer places were flowering sedges and wild grasses. Who could say but the melic and the galingale of Jean Ingelow and Tennyson were there? For what but a sweet grass with a honeyed name was the "melic" of that meadow where the high tide came in on that awful night when "My son's wife Elizabeth." walked there, calling "Cusha! Cusha!" till the waters came? And galingale is only a sedge, with flowers like heads of grain. But poets have such a way to charm, that they

"MY SON'S WIFE ELIZABETH."

lift the most familiar thing out of the common-place into the realm of the romantic and ideal.

It was there we found a bed of the checkered rattlesnake plaintain, which people put into their ferneries, naming it adder's tongue. And there we used to search diligently for the herb which old women call "chocolate-root." The earthy flavored beverage made from it we had been permitted to taste, but the whereabouts of the thing itself has always been a myth. It was not by any means from a desire to become better acquainted with this beverage, but from a keen delight in seeking.

There were beautiful and singular things enough in and around there to satisfy anybody. I have spoken of some of the flowers which came early — those white and daintily tinted ones. The ground was fairly starred with them. Every bank was sprinkled with dwarf cornel and the fragile blossoms of the gold-thread; the two-leaved Solomon's seal was as thick as if the earth had been sown with it.

In one spot there was a winsome and very sensitive species of oxalis, wood sorrel; in another there were some curious green orchids. There were green dragons, kinsmen to Jack-in-the-pulpit; there was the tiarella on the water's edge, with the glister as of hoar frost on its bishop's caps; there were spring beauties, swamp saxifrage, meadow rue; and in midsummer there was one purple fringed orchis — that

refined, pale, most exquisite flower which seems the consummate result of greenhouse culture, yet unfolds its spiral of finely-cut petals and sheds its luscious sweetness in a place so remote, so seemingly unfit for it. What could have possessed the Dorsetshire people that in their folk-lore they should name it *giddy-gander*?

THE FRINGED ORCHIS.

The flowering shrubs, either in the swamp or bordering on it, were numerous, and all except the spice-bush were in white, and the ground was clad in immortal green by reason of the Canada yew, or ground hemlock, as it is sometimes called. How beautiful was the heavy fringe along the prostrate branches, and what a gem of beauty the wax-like scarlet berry in which was bedded such a meaty little nut! And there was the greatest abundance of the creeping snowberry, or chiogones, which is otherwise known as the mountain partridge-berry, and by herb-gatherers who find it good for some ailment, "French ivy." Could any thing be more absurd? What a lovely thing it is! Known only to cool,

PARTRIDGE-BERRY.

northern woods, where the soil is damp, or as it is introduced into botanical gardens and hothouses, but comparatively few persons have ever seen it in its perfection.

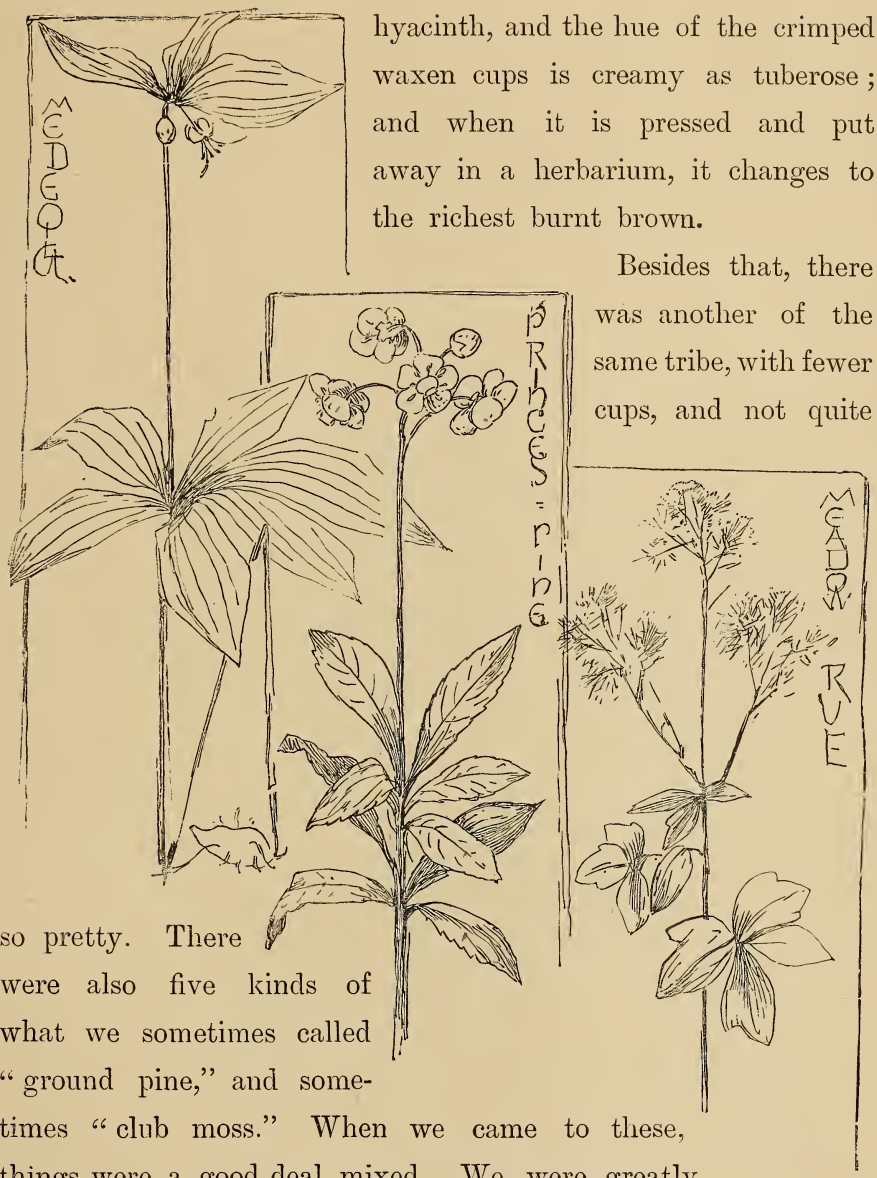
But in that swamp it was at home; creeping over the old logs and stumps, and making the daintiest of carpets with its brown, thread-like vines on which were closely set those tiny, ovate, glossy, aromatic leaves. Its mite of a flower comes on the under side, and after it the most minute and the prettiest berry in the world, looking like a drop of white wax, and tasting of checkerberry.

## THE NORWAY PINES.

The swamp ended at the north, and was lost in a vague no-man's-land of alder thickets on one side, and delicious woods on the other, through which the sled-road kept on and on, and the same wild vines and flowers, the ferns and ground-pines were contained. In spring and summer it was delightful to be there. In autumn, when the bluejays were calling among the trees, and acorns dropped on our heads, and now and then we started up a partridge, and squirrels scampered across the floor of fallen leaves, and the great spaces were lighted up by a glory of wine-red, where the sun touched the hobble-bushes — ah! there are no words to tell what rapture that was!

On the west were the "Norway pines," a pleasant woodland of those stately evergreens, intermixed with oak and maple, of few acres only, hanging towards the swamp; but it had many a little dent and basin, many a bank on the side where it descended to the wet ground. In the hollows which always held moisture, were choicest beds of mitchella. It is a vine which revels in dampness, and is happiest where the snow has longest lain. There the leaves are rank, there is the deepest flush on the balsam-breathing, starry flowers, and the most flaming scarlet on the plumpest of berries.

There were the lily-bells of the straw-flower, known as wild oats, and the larger one of the same genus, which has the twisted name of *perfoliata*, from a worse twist there is about the setting of the green leaves, which are wound about the stem, and there transfixed by it in a fashion as difficult as it is to all appearance needless. There was pipsissiway, or prince's pine, with its shining thick leaves, and in June the reddish-white fragrant flowers. We used to call it "toothache root" and "rheumatism weed" — I suppose from some old woman's notion. Then there was the beautiful sort of first cousin to it, the pyrola (or pear wintergreen, from the likeness of the leaves to those of a young pear-tree), specified as *rotundifola*, and which has a spike of such delicious flowers. Their fragrance is finer than




hyacinth, and the hue of the crimped waxen cups is creamy as tuberose; and when it is pressed and put away in a herbarium, it changes to the richest burnt brown.

Besides that, there was another of the same tribe, with fewer cups, and not quite so pretty. There were also five kinds of what we sometimes called "ground pine," and sometimes "club moss." When we came to these, things were a good deal mixed. We were greatly

in doubt. One was like cords of chenille; one grew stiff and bristling clear into the water; one was like a Liliputian evergreen tree, standing solitary; one was the genuine "festoon ground-pine," of which Christmas garlands are made; and the fifth was like the green skeleton of it, a mere outline.

### THE MEDEOLA.

This was the Indian cucumber-root. We were accustomed to see it in all similar woods, growing up from a bed of last year's dry oak leaves. After we had learned the name, we did not rest until we had investigated with reference to the cucumber, and found it even so — a small, white, juicy, clean and very wholesome-looking root, enough like the edible it was named for, to be wholly satisfactory. The flower is a little greenish-white lily, with petals curving backward; and it is specially noticeable on account of three long red stigmas, as if three ends of thread of that color had been fastened there to mark it by.

But that was no reason why it should be named for the sorceress Medea, of classic fable. When autumn came, however, we guessed the riddle. She gave to Jason enchanted herbs to put him to sleep, according to the story of the search for the golden fleece. And was not this enchanted, when, in

WE INVESTIGATED WITH REFERENCE TO THE CUCUMBERS.

September, the whorls of leaves, which at two places wide apart encircled the stem, were dyed of the richest crimson at the base, whence it spread more and more like a stain of blood?

It has been quite a habit with botanists to fix some classic name to a flower; and it is no more than fair that they should give us the reason. There is nothing about the shrub andromeda, to recall the ill-used princess who was chained to a rock; and the circæ, or enchanter's nightshade, is as harmless a little white flower as the strawberry blossom.

## LINNÆA.

In the "Norway pines" were beds of Linnæa. When we first knew about it there was only one; in after years there were several. To go there day after day in the time of bloom; to stand and look at those fairy bells; to kneel down on the moss and inhale their fragrance, was an ever new delight. No wonder Linnæus was so enraptured when he first set eyes on this sweet twin flower away up in Lapland. It has been the joy of botanists and travellers in Alpine regions from that day to this; "a sight for sair een," as Walter Scott would have said.

It is so retiring, so shy, such a drooping, blushing recluse, that I felt as if a sacrilege had been committed when one

summer, as I was going along a by-road, I saw a bank of it out in the sun, left exposed where a forest had just been cut down. That piece of woods had always been the home of many of the more delicate kinds of wild flowers; but the trees had been felled and drawn off in winter; and when these tender things woke from their sleep it was to find that their shelter was no longer there. And here they were pining and dwindling for lack of their wonted moisture and seclusion. I should have thought that all the dryads would have cried out at such a wrong. I rescued a few of the homesick Linnæa, and gave them protection among the ferns by a friendly well.

### WE CIRCUMNAVIGATE THE PASTURE.

I have left the loveliest to the last. On a memorable day we discovered it.

To explain: You must have seen the possibilities of such a piece of territory as "the pasture," though you have not seen them all. Probably no forty acres of land ever afforded more enjoyment to the owner and his children than that piece of real estate.

It was a very zigzag tract; and one morning early in June we took it in our heads to circumnavigate it, as we said; or, as surveyors would term it, "perambulate the

LINNÆA — WE TRANSPLANTED THEM TO THE SHELTER OF SOME FERNS.

line." This was a thing we had never done; and on account of the swamp, which ran over into the land of other people, and, by reason of the circumstance that a fence was almost out of the question in certain spots, and bounds were somewhat mythical in that quarter, was considered impracticable; but which, cost what it might, we were determined should remain undone no longer. We would explore the unknown, reach Ultima Thule. What happened, how long it took, how we lost our bearings as soon as the brush fence became extinct, what depths we sounded, what perils dared, what a blistering, foot-weary, devious, difficult route we went, and with what plucky spirits we pushed on, and what immense satisfaction we had when the thing was an accomplished fact — these have nothing to do with the subject in hand.

## THE WHITE "BIRD-ON-THE-WING."

We came out in the "Norway pines," and the ground was, as usual about that season — it was the seventh of June — all one rosy light with the flowers of the fringed polygala. Not rose exactly, not purple, not lavender, but of a hue made from all these colors as only flowers are made: soft, bright, blushing, auroral, the rosy purple of the morning sky.

As we strolled along, pulling handfuls of them, what was our astonishment to behold white ones! They were not faded ones, but white, a distinct variety. There was a space of several rods quite covered with them, though the purple were interspersed. A few straggled further away; but beyond that limited area, not then, or ever after, could we find one.

They were white as milk. Nearly all white flowers that you can think of have some tinge of color, be it never so slight; or there will be some veins or spots, or else some tinted tip to the stamens. It is rare, exceedingly rare, to find a flower which is absolutely and in every part, white. But this was. It had not a speck or hint of color about it. The petals, the wings, the fringe, all were milk-white. It was the purest flower I ever saw.

The common purple one has the name of "bird-on-the-wing." If you turn back two portions of it, you will see good reason why. There sure enough, is the bird with wings outspread. This ineffably lovely one was like a white dove just ready to fly.

We had many times expressed the wish that in "the pasture" we could only find a flower which we had not already seen. And now it had come to pass.

### THE LADY'S-SLIPPER.

The next gay comer after the purple polygala was the

PASTURE LILIES — A SUMPTUOUS SHEAF.

lady's-slipper, which in all countries is recognized as something of the shoe kind. With botanists it is *Cypripedium*, a grand word for "Venus' sock" or buskin. In some Catholic lands it is "Our Lady's slipper," for the Virgin Mary; among the French peasants it is "the sabot of the Virgin." The Indians called it "moccasin flower," and the children have the prettiest of all — "Whip-poor-Will's shoes."

There is one variety in greenhouses which ought to be labelled "Cinderella's slipper," for it is half transparent and of pale, glistening green; so much like glass that you can fancy it sliding off and losing itself, like the enchanted slipper of that frightened runaway from the fairy ball.

Our one kind, red, on a single stem, has still another name of wild valerian; and once when we were coming home with our hands full, we met that queer old man who knew more of this sort of lore than anybody we had ever seen, and he said, "See here! you take that, and you can look on the sun, and it will be like the moon, your eyes will be so strong;" which advice, being venturesome as we were, I wonder we never tried to follow.

At another time, he told us if we carried daisies home we must burn them; for they were the "Nottingham curses;" and if we threw one of the flowers out on the land, we'd never get rid of it again.

I feel obliged to confess that we were guilty of intro-

ducing a good many wilding things into cultivated places. Some anomalous plants from time to time made their unwelcome appearance in the garden; and we three young folks kept discreet silence when there was great wonder expressed as to how they ever got there. We did, however, acknowledge the sarsaparilla, which obtained a root-hold and held it, at the back doorstep.

### THE "LAND-LILIES."

That is what we all called them. First, those in "the pasture." They grew amidst the sweet-fern and brakes and low blueberry bushes on each side of the sled-path. They have grown there these forty years. There they were the very last summer that ever was, glowing in the green shade like torches. Those orange-red lilies — what a burning color they have! how rich the tawny spots! what elegant upturned bells! We were always covetous about them, and, selfishly appropriating them, carried them all home — a sumptuous sheaf. And to this day I do the same. I can never leave one standing. Wherever I see one, if it is possible I have it.

Then there were the Canada lilies. They came later, and also lasted longer. We had to go further for them, to the meadow and the intervals ( or "inter*vales*," as the farmers were wont to say). That is a local New England word,

CANADA LILIES — ON STATELY STEMS.

which cannot well be spared, and it is as good as "bottom lands" of the West.

In the rich alluvial soil where such long grasses are, stood the stately lily-stems, sometimes taller than everything else; and there they swayed and swung, as the grass swayed in billowy swells before the wind. And the flowers, as they bent and rose again, made dashes of brightness like sun-flecks going and coming The strong stems spread off at the top like a candelabra, supporting ten, twelve, or more, of the recurved flowers. The colors were oriental in their combination, and superb in effect, gold with carmine and bright brown in veins and shadings and blotches. And the buds were the perfection of elegance, as finished in their fine arch and lines as the curves of a violin.

"OVER T' THE POND."

In our pasture-bogs we had the yellow water-lilies — spatter-dock, cow-lilies — strange, tropical-looking plants, with their

pulpy, slippery, heart-shaped leaves of shining green, their buds of green rimmed with gold, and flower-cups green and gold without, purple-stained within. And it was the greenest of green and the most golden of gold; and the flowers had a double coronet, as if it were device of some royal house which had gained this dual sign of sovereignty by illustrious marriage or force of arms.

## "OVER T' THE POND."

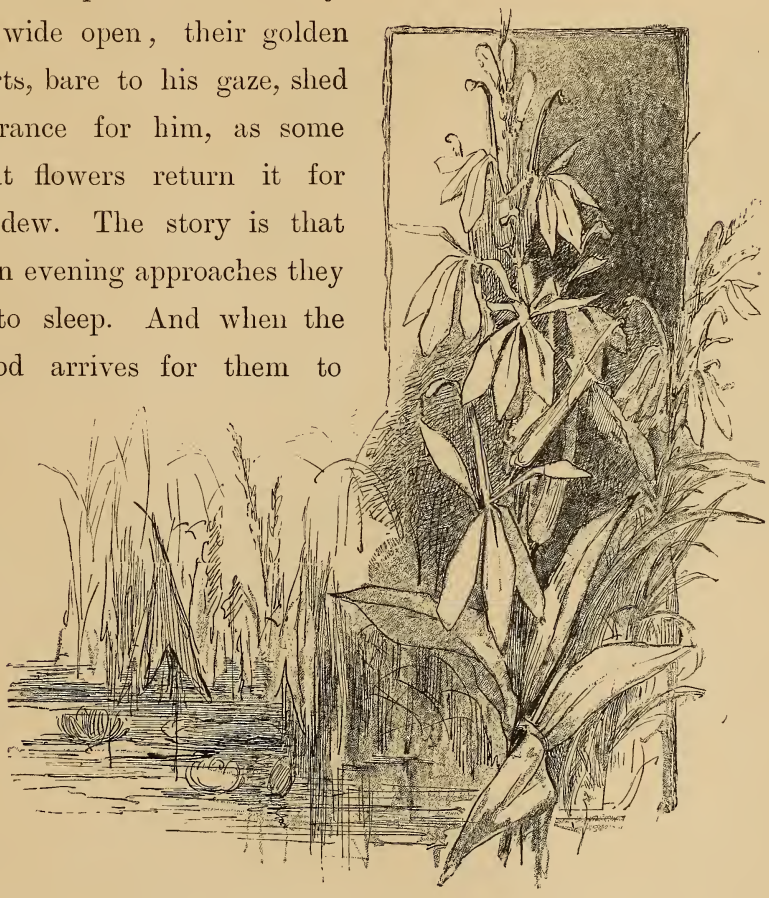
There are two wild flowers that are favorites with everybody. People who care for no others are touched by the beauty, the purity and fragrance of the trailing arbutus and the white pond-lily.

If all the spring's newness, the scent of the mosses, the quickening life which makes one's pulses leap, is in the first, so the best of midsummer is in the other.

To go after lilies — what pictures of cool green woods overshadowing the margin of some lonely sheet of water that calls up! What winding ways knee-deep in fern to reach it! What a silence broods there, except as some bird's note breaks upon it, or the plash of a dipping wing, or a rustle among the reeds as cattle come down to drink, or the small voices of insects stinging the noontide air.

I have in mind just that place and time. It was a July

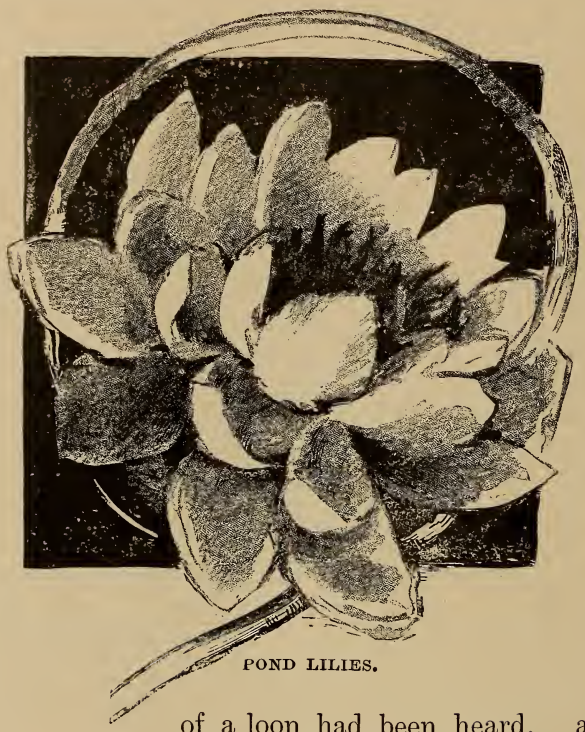
day, at high noon. Midday, when the sun blazes down at the fiercest, is the best time to see lilies. For are they not sun-worshipers? Then they are wide open, their golden hearts, bare to his gaze, shed fragrance for him, as some night flowers return it for the dew. The story is that when evening approaches they go to sleep. And when the period arrives for them to



SILENCE BROODS THERE.

die, they turn over on their faces and sink down out of sight forever into the black ooze from which they sprung.

The pond was away in from travelled ways and habitations of men. We had always known about it, for our elders had often been, and brought home lilies and the queer pitchers of the sarracenia, called by the children "foxgloves."



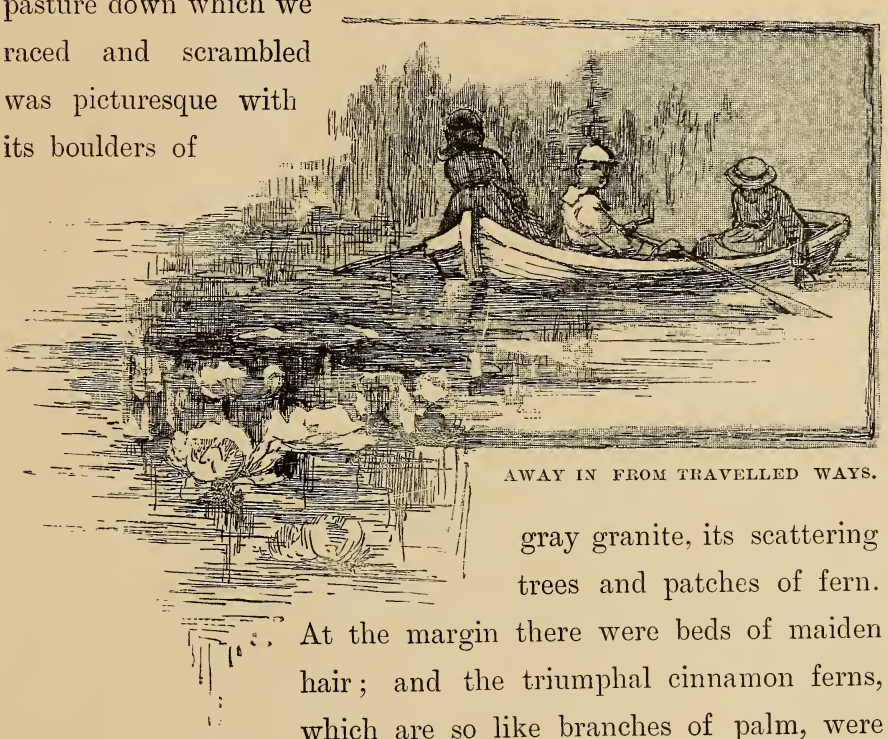
POND LILIES.

The older folks always spoke of it as "over t' the pond," and we had a strong desire to go. Strange waterfowl had been seen there, and the cry of a loon had been heard, and there was a quaking cranberry meadow over on the other side. Attractive place! It had a fascination to us; there was the element of the unusual and unknown. What if we should see a crane snowy white, or a heron tall as we were? The thought was enough to thrill one. As for the loon — that was too much to hope for.

We went: the road was an old, neglected one, little used.

Grass grew in it as in a field, and blackberry-bushes almost overran it. It seemed away off; not lonesome, but separated from the common life. And the pond lay sparkling in the midday sun, down half a mile from the road, half rimmed in green woods; and the cranberry meadow showed ruddy on the further shore.

Everything was worth remembering. The rough "side-hill" pasture down which we raced and scrambled was picturesque with its boulders of gray granite, its scattering trees and patches of fern. At the margin there were beds of maiden hair; and the triumphal cinnamon ferns, which are so like branches of palm, were the very Titans of their race, each separate one four or five feet long. Wonderful reeds, and the flags where cat-tails are,

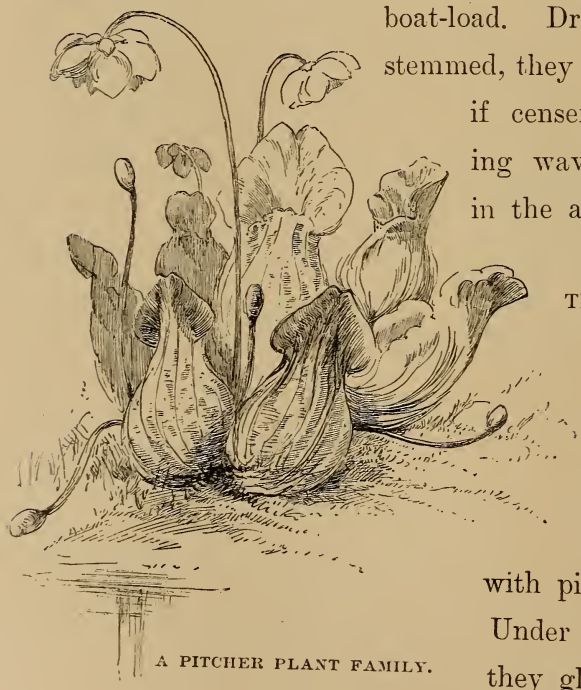


AWAY IN FROM TRAVELLED WAYS.

made a jungle almost tall enough for the cows to get lost in as they went pressing their way through.

Down on the little beach of white sand, standing just in the water, grew the pretty little speckled heads of pipewort, and the silvery, begonia-like flowers of the floating-heart. Scarlet cardinal-flowers glowed like fire among the shadows under the trees at the water's edge; and there were rods out on the pond which were blue with pickerel-weed over the whole area, like the deep blue of the noon sky in midwinter.

The lilies were all open; one could gather them by the boat-load. Dripping, white, golden-stemmed, they gave out fragrance as if censers of incense were being waved by invisible hands in the air.



A PITCHER PLANT FAMILY.

### THE PITCHER PLANTS.

The meadow was in its glory; not with ripe cranberries — it was too early — but with pitcher-plants in bloom. Under that fervid July sun they glowed like the glorious

red of old stained glass, or like a ruby stone, or wine when the light shines through it. On a dark day the color is probably purplish and dull, but on a bright one it is as I have said; it is sumptuous.

The flower is in shape like no other. It has been fancied to resemble a side-saddle: wherefore the name.

The form and use of the leaf suggest the three others by which it is known. It is a fox-glove — a very long-wristed one: it is a pitcher-plant, and a huntsman's cup; all quite to the purpose.

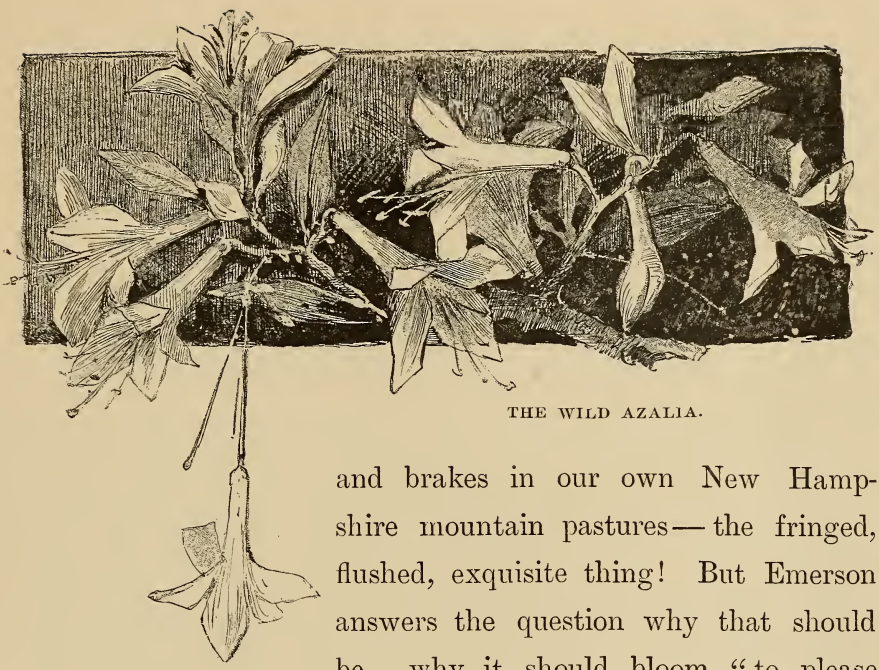
The pitcher has a hood which serves for cover. It is always upright, holds nearly a gill of water, and is never empty. The texture is so tough that it will bear being kept on the hot coals till the water boils. Many a time we have tried the experiment. In those days such a term as "carniverous" had hardly been applied to plants. It would have seemed worse than the cannibals. Nevertheless, our superb sarracenia entraps insects in that fatal cup, and destroys, devours, absorbs, or in some way annihilates them. And a curious little sun-dew, which we afterwards found on a meadow, glistening as its name indicates, does the same unnatural thing.

The pitcher-plant is peculiar in every respect. A family grows about itself, and keeps up a perpetual renewal of its members. When an old one begins to decay, a new one starts out, or *vice versa*. But being tenacious of life, the

patriarchs are long in dying; meanwhile the younglings appear in the form of a crimson wand, very handsome; but in growing, change to the established standard — the perfect pitcher in green veined with red. Seen on the background of dull crimson peat or sphagnum moss which carpets the meadow, they present an appearance most unique.

After that we hoped for anything and everything, even for kinds that were not supposed to grow about here. We sought with expectation for the hare-bell, the pure white trillium, and the white cardinal-flower, and even for the walking fern. And might there not be a rhodora? At first it was more than doubtful. It was like the chance of there being a holly, or a magnolia, or a pink water-lily. But when we heard of a certain "scraggly bush covered with red flowers," before the leaves blooming in June, which somebody remembered to have seen in a far-off rocky pasture, while another somebody tried to describe something similar in another lonesome pasture miles in the opposite direction, our enthusiasm was at the highest pitch, and we felt the stimulus of assured success. And the rhodora it *was* and *is!* Flowers from one of those bushes are here before me this moment as I write. What rapture when we saw them for the first time! My companion of so many jaunts clapped her hands for joy. To think, too, that all those years it had been blossoming almost unknown, away back in those solitudes, amidst the sweet-fern

RHODORA AND FRINGED POLYGALA.



THE WILD AZALIA.

and brakes in our own New Hampshire mountain pastures — the fringed, flushed, exquisite thing! But Emerson answers the question why that should be — why it should bloom "to please the desert," in those loveliest lines of his, which will always bring up his benignant face:

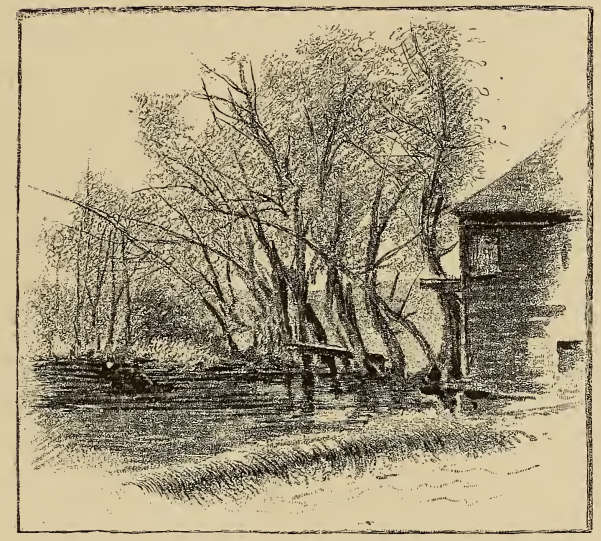
"Rhodora! If the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the marsh and sky,
Dear, tell them that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then beauty is its own excuse for being.
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew;
But in my simple ignorance suppose
The selfsame power that brought me there brought you."

And next, we heard of "river-pinks" wonderful for fragrance,

and fringed like a honeysuckle: and what should they prove to be but the flowers we had been on the lookout for ever since, once on a time, we had had glimpses of their kind in bloomy thickets down by the sea — azalias!

Yes: everything (almost everything) comes to him who will wait; and if these were conventional papers they should all come along in an orderly and timely way; the lady's-slipper and the polygala and rhodora should be earlier in the ranks; but they are here like the happenings in our lives, and their story is partly of to-day and yesterday, and partly of long ago, told in little episodes, often reminiscent, always rambling, and always a flower-life which was a very real and delightful part of our own.

# WILD FLOWERS OF AUTUMN.



WHERE SOME BLACK MILLPOND COMES INTO THE PANORAMA.

WHEN does summer leave off and autumn begin? Ask the katydids and the grasshoppers. They seem to have a good deal to do with the matter. When they begin to pipe and chirp it is midsummer; by the time they have performed their little part we are far into autumn.

Between the dates much has happened, and many flowers that loved those earlier days are no more.

The cardinal's flower lingers on. You can find it in abundance in September — I ought to take back that word "find" as a kind of wrong done to this imperial presence, for be it where it may, to miss it is impossible. It makes

itself seen as a jet of fire would, though it is not in hue like fire, but the deeper red of warm red blood; a live color such as pulsates and burns in a blood-red gem; "the color likest blood," as the old Saxon writers said of the carbuncle. It is the supremest expression of red, its very perfection and exaltation. We have no other flower that has it. If you should lay a bunch of scarlet geraniums of the most glowing scarlet known to that flower, or the rich, warm salvia, by the side of it, they would look faded and cheap.

A BLUE AND WHITE GINGER-POT OF DAISIES.

"King's fingers" is one of the common names, said to be from a fancied resemblance of the petals (soft as velvet) to the spread fingers of a glove; and king's gloves they needs must be. The other, taking it away up in the ecclesiastical world, keeps always in mind the red of the cardinal's cassock and hat.

Oh! flower of sovereign and ecclesiastical rank, has another these dual honors? Its choice is often for a dark place, from which it seems to be advancing, so boldly is it projected against the green gloom. Often it stands just under the roots of some tree which the caving in of a river-bank has left bare; oftener I have seen it away in in some secluded cove where the sun was never known to shine. Certainly its superb color has some sources with which light has nothing to do.

It is evidently quite a cosmopolitan. How frequently in rushing along in the cars through the country one catches sight of its glorious blood-red where some black mill-pond or bend in a river comes for an instant into the panorama. It seems to be as well suited with the salt breath of the ocean as with the inland air; perhaps glowing even more fervidly, if the thing is possible, as all flowers do by the sea. One day in August I saw its tall spires among swamp azalias on the edge of a pool almost out by the light-house at Gay Head; and it was like coming across a friend from home.

WITH OUR TOES FASTENED IN A CRACK.

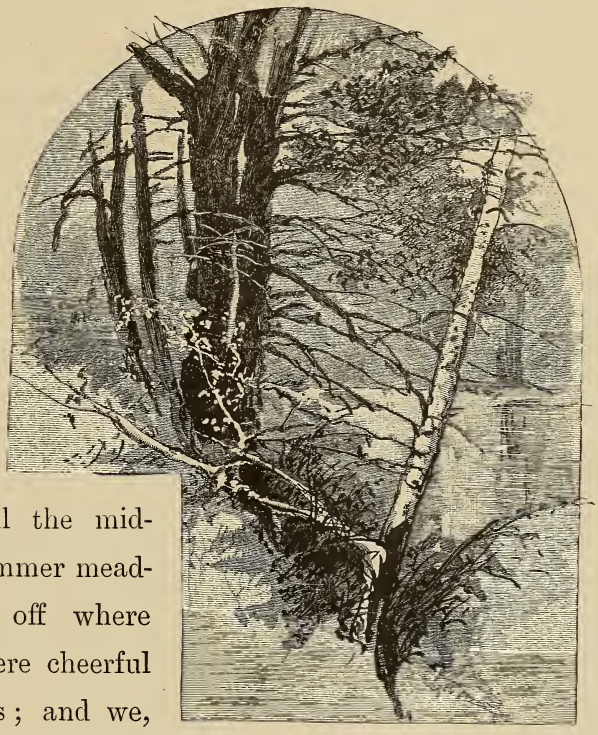
How pleasant it is to associate flowers in this way with some place where we saw them, and to remember a little trip by something which was there in bloom! In doing so, we unconsciously keep invisible flower-journals almost as accurate as if we had set down the dates.

In this way I remember just when and where I first saw harebells (the bonny bluebells of Scotland), and all the circumstances of the journey, and how the country looked, and where for the second time, years later, I saw their kind again. It was in mid-August, as before, but this time they were swinging airily, blue as the deep blue of the sky, up in the fissures of that tremendous mountain wall which shuts close upon the pass down the valley of the Saco to the Willey House.

I recall, too, those ledges, nine miles out at sea, so gay with their orange-colored lichens, and adorned in every crevice with the scarlet pimpernel, holding up such burning bright cups to be filled with noon sunshine; and those purple levels of marsh rosemary against dazzling sands; and the samphire which dyed with sumptuous amaranth great watery wastes where the tide came up.

I shall never forget the daisies along a certain mowing-field; nor how, on a morning dripping dew on us from every laden bough, we rode on a cross-road which was a green lane and nothing more, threading in and out, now in sunshine

and then in shade; nor how close the red lilies grew beside the track; nor how the daisies stood on the grassy ridge between the ruts which wheels had worn, standing so tall that they reached the horse's breast; how we watched them bend their heads as we pressed against them, and, when we had gone on, sweep back uninjured. All the midsummer days, and summer meadows, and waysides off where country roads go, were cheerful with those pure faces; and we, too, thought that "nothing less than a blue and white ginger-pot full of daisies" was "much satisfaction."



BUT THE BANK WAS STEEP.

But that one field, it is so sun-fixed, so photographed, on my mental vision that I never need be, I never am, without daisies. These are perpetual blossoms; they are with me the whole year round; they never fade; their time is now,

and to-morrow, and every day, if I choose, as I do, to see them: swaying on their slim stalks, white, open-faced, sunny, beautiful, on a green "mede," as fair to the eye as that which Chaucer praised. He, of all the singers, seems most

UP THE RIVER.

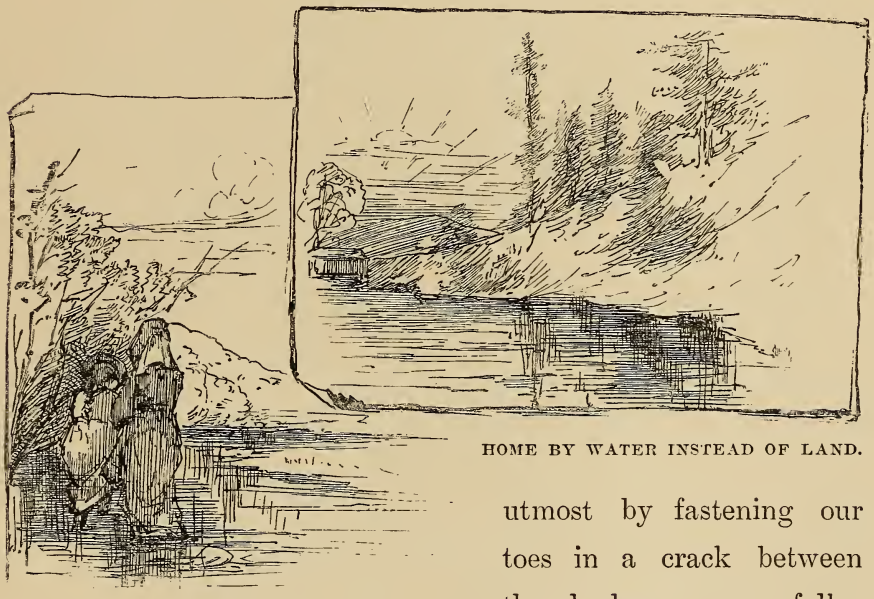
passionately to have worshipped this dear flower, the "day's-eye" of the poets, the "bairn-wort," or child's flower, of the Scottish peasants.

"Of all the flowers in the mede
Then love I most these flowers of white and rede,
Such that men call daisies in our town:
To them I have so great affection

That I get up, and walking in the mede
To see this flower against the sun spreade;
And soon as ever the sun ginneth west
To seen this flower, how it will go to rest."

## ON THE ISLAND.

The "king's fingers" was the first river-flower we knew. Standing on the old bridge and raising ourselves to the

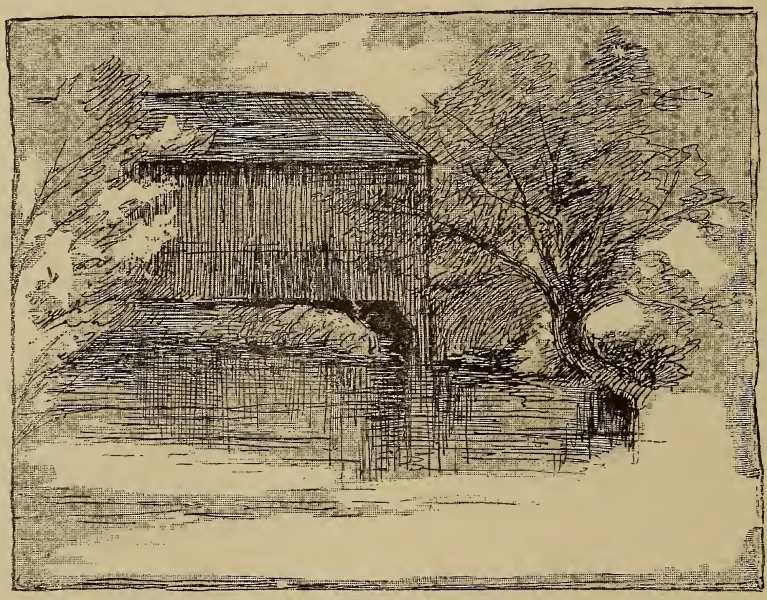


HOME BY WATER INSTEAD OF LAND.

utmost by fastening our toes in a crack between the planks, we young folks, off for a Saturday half holiday, would gaze longingly up the river, spying here one, and there another. But the bank was steep, and it shelved out over them to deep

water; therefore from the land side they were inaccessible. However, there was another way — we could wade to them, and we did.

On one occasion when we were a mile down the river,



FROM BRIDGE TO BRIDGE.

it came into our heads to go home by water instead of land. So we waded in the middle of the stream all the way up from bridge to bridge. There was an outlaw kind of pleasure in doing something that it was not likely anybody else had done, or thought of doing.

It was a novel method of following the river, and there was vast satisfaction in it. We explored the mysterious

THE PLACE OF WILD GRAPE-VINES.

recesses along the alder-fringed banks, which could not be seen except from our place of vantage. We gathered pipe-worts and cardinal-flowers, dainty ferns and grasses. We walked into the brown shadows, and out again into the liquid gold, where the warm September sunshine lighted the water. We were associates of white butterflies and the dragon-flies which on gauzy wings were flitting the same way we were taking. Birds' nests were revealed to us in perilous situations: empty now, and their late occupants were abroad like ourselves for an outing; and we all alike were in a sort of enchanted realm, away from the world of study and work and stints and chores, irresponsible and happy.

Our childish escapade ended on an island which we knew a good deal about in those days. It was long and narrow, with the "canal" on one side and the river on the other, the old grist-mill at the lower end, the dam and saw-mill at the upper. A sort of jungle it was at that time of year, where quantities of such coarse, showy things as the purple and white thoroughwort, milk-weed and white-topped aster grew, and some tawdry plants of the sunflower pattern, which we called elecampane or angelica, just as it happened, without knowing whether either was correct. Of course there was a drapery of the sticky cleavers (catch-weed or bed-straw), pretty, and almost as delicate as a green gauze veil; but how it would attach itself to one's garments! And then

that other officious thing of the too clinging kind, belonging to the "beggar tick" race, which fastened its barbs into the cloth like fish-hooks, whence they had to be picked out one by one; thistles too, and burdocks. But there were compensations for all these.

Miles of clematis, for one thing. We were always bringing home great loads of it. We went there after it at both its seasons of loveliness. First when it was in exuberance of bloom, with its clusters of pale-green flowers of the tint of sea-foam. It must have been in blossoming time that somebody gave it the happy name, by which it is often called, of "traveller's joy;" and it must have been that vision of grace and purity which suggested the other and more common one of "virgin's bower." Then, when going to seed, shaggy and gray, some one, seeing it, said it was "old man's beard." One other is equally appropriate and always so, and was very likely to have been used as long ago as the old English botanist Evelyn's time — the good strong Saxon *withy-wind*.

Woodbine too, or Virginia creeper, in flaming crimson all through late autumn; and it was a place of wild grape-vines, whose strong arms held everything else up. In June the island was all one subtile, delicate, bewitching fragrance with the flowers, as if from banks of violets or mignonette — the Junes of all those years were perfumed with them; and in September and October the air was flavored like a vineyard

BRINGING HOME GREAT LOADS OF IT.

in vintage time when the sun drew the winey odor out. They had a puckery, acid tang to them, those grapes, if the truth must be told; but what of that?

Other trailers and climbers were the green-brier, which is a smilax on an enlarged plan, bearing the most astonishingly solid blue-black berries as hard as bullets; and the bitter-sweet nightshade with the brilliant blue flowers with a golden eye. Then there were several autumn-blooming plants which hovered on the edge of this greenery; the snake's-head, or turtle-head, or shell-flower, in flesh-color with gaping lips; the vervain, in deadened blue, like steel; the friendly herb known sometimes as "self-heal," because it is an antidote for poison, and sometimes as "blue-curls." It is this which Thoreau refers to, as seeing it in March, holding up its "seemingly empty pitchers" in the snow.

On the island, too, we always expected to find that wonderful flower, the closed gentian, with its symmetrical tubes that never open, set in a cluster, as coral insects might build, or like the cells in honeycomb, or as cubes of crystal are sometimes grouped in a piece of granite. And *such* a blue as it is! the burning blue of a dark-blue gem shading into violet. It is like the "blue fire" of the firmament.

The one consummate flower of the autumn does not grow here, or if it does, we have failed to discover or hear of it. For years we have been searching and inquiring for the fringed

gentian. "What is the flower like?" is the question put to us; and nobody but a painter or a poet can make an answer that will do justice to that divine blue, and the fringe of it like fringed lashes. We are still seekers. It is the ideal flower we are in quest of. The miles and miles of country I can remember by that eager looking for! Some day we shall find it. Meanwhile, just once we have seen it growing, while on a journey late in October; and the blue vision is never to be forgotten. There are many persons who have waited as long, and never seen it at all, this heavenly flower:

"Blue — blue — as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall."

## ALONG THE RAILROAD.

A more delicate species of blue-curls grew in the gravel along the railroad track and between the sleepers — a wee bit of a bush like lavender or penny-royal, covered with dainty blue pitchers just ready to drop off, and it gave out a warm, aromatic odor, as penetrating as summer-savory. When we brought it home our garments would smell like a garden of herbs.

Another trim thing which we found nowhere else was the spotted spurge, spread out on that scorched and barren gravel, and hugging it close as if it were glued there. The color of

CLEMATIS AND DODDER.

the plant throughout was dull crimson; the leaves and vine were minute, but every curve was one of grace. It grew in obedience to some law of beauty, and looked like a red pattern daintily traced on a sand-colored surface. There likewise was a dwarf horse-tail or scouring rush, that made one think of a Cossack or wild Tartar of the steppes, stunted, sturdy and barbaric. The taller, graceful kind was abundant down in the ditches on each side. We took pleasure in always speaking of it as "gun-bright," because we had heard some old person say that in early times the men used it to scour their muskets and "Queen's arms" with, whence it got that quaint name, so characteristic of a primitive people. And that brings to mind what we were told about the button-balls (I have referred to them as growing so profusely in those pasture bogs), which bristle all over with points, as anybody can see; therefore some person of peculiar ideas fixed to them the name of "old maid's beetles," to belabor somebody or something with, as a wood-chopper pounds away at his wedges.

We went on those railroad tramps more or less frequently for eight months out of the twelve, starting as early as March after sheaves of the bright willow osiers, and never giving up until the snow came in good earnest. So we were in the way of knowing what that line of country had to show.

It was on one of those expeditions that we first saw dodder; not, however, growing on the trunk of an oak, as

we had somewhere read, nor on any tree. The time was when the great plumy sprays of purple and sky-blue asters, the queen-of-the-meadow, and other such showy and sturdy autumnal flowers were in their prime. The impatious touch-me-not, snap-weed, wild balsamine (or whatever one may choose from its list of names), was also rioting in bloom, and those spotted ear-drops of burning gold mottled with brown hung like jewels along the lush green stems; and the place where these things and the vervain, the clematis, the clivus, the golden-rod and ferns were growing together was a flower hedge of beauty. In the midst of it a dodder had come up like any regular plant out of the ground. It was a slight otter-colored thread where it started, and such a thread it continued to be, as if it was being spun out by elfin fingers working night and day away down out of sight.

A magic thing it really seemed, a pretty wonder; it had wound itself tight around every plant in the neighborhood, and tied them all together in double and triple nooses, and then gone on to do further mischief; and the gay little thread showed from quite a distance like bright embroidery on the green. It was in blossom, too, bossed with clusters of tiny white flowers. A few weeks later, when we passed that way, it had gone to seed, and the transparent globules were like pearl beads. We broke off a stem to examine them; and I suppose a seed dropped into the bunch of wood-sorrel and

herb Robert we had in our hands, for one day the winter after, we discovered a dodder growing with these plants in the hanging basket where they had been planted.

### INDIAN PIPE.

We found that autumn another of the parasites, the many-flowered Indian pipe, technically, *monotropa hypopitys* (colloquially "bird's nest," and "pine sap.") The common Indian pipe, that lovely calumet, so exquisitely moulded as if from white wax, may be met with in any of our rich woods; but the other is comparatively rare. The most remarkable thing about it is its fragrance. A single stalk of this plant, which never had leaf, or color, or proper flower, will scent for weeks a room in which it is kept, and the perfume never wholly leaves the dried-up cluster. It is not the balsam odor of the pines, but a delicious sweetness like white violets — like a whole handful of white violets, a nosegay on a single stem.

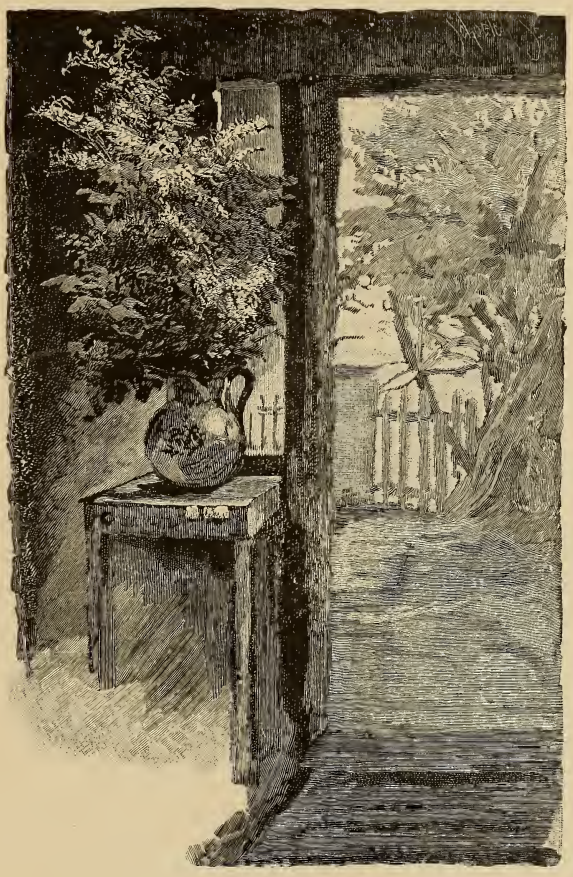
### GOLDEN DAYS.

By the middle of September the world begins to look autumnal. One may not be able to explain just what the change is. It is not quite definable in words, though the eye perceives it, and it is in the very atmosphere. It has been silent and gradual, but a new phase has come, and all at once we know

it. Then we become aware that the perishable kinds of flowers have passed by; the tender things have vanished; we have seen the last of them; those which shed their petals and are of similar evanescent habits, are gone. No more dainty chalices and stars; the trumpets and bells have dropped; they belong with the by-gones. The need now is of woody fibre, strong stems and fast colors. Composite flowers make most of the list on the late catalogue; such as the golden-rod, that has been ever since June preparing for the protracted bloom which we have assurance of in the long spike of graduated buds.

There is no longer any shyness or hiding. Almost everything seeks the light and stands out to take all the sunshine that the shortening days can give; and there are but few of the merely tinted flowers or those of equivocal hue. Hardly any are fragrant — for the pungent odor of golden-rod and aster will not bear the name. I must except the life-everlasting which diffuses such fine aroma as the foot touches it; and that luscious little orchid of the *Spiranthus* family, by some spoken of as the spiral neottia or the twisted spike, but oftenest as "slender ladies' tresses" — I have somewhere read that the proper one is "ladies' *traces*," from a likeness to the ornamented cord (called "traces" in old English), which the Saxon ladies used to wear about the waist for girdles.

These are the days of blue and gold, when the asters of so



SACRED TO GOLDEN-ROD.

many cerulean hues make the earth look as if patches of the sky had fallen, and there are whole fields in one blaze of glory with golden-rod. If we were to look for symbols and "correspondences," as some people do, as Mrs. Whitney does in her charming books, and believe that each color meant something and bore a definite relation to some other thing, we should have to say that these two represent the blue of the enduring heavens and the brightness of the unfailing sun. Not long ago some writer expressed the hope that "that coarse flower, the golden-rod," which has for the past few years been painted on so many panels and plaques, would go out of fashion! As if fashion could suppress a flower! Not if everybody has the enthusiasm

WILD PLACES.

over it that we have, bringing home every autumn of our lives loads of the glorious, tossing plumes to keep constantly fresh in the great Delft pitcher, sacred to golden-rod.

Yellow is the chief color among our New England wild flowers, taking the seasons through. If it was possible to map out the color lines, as geological strata are defined in charts, it would be seen to be in excess of any other. The acres, the leagues of golden-rod would settle it. From the coming of the crow-foot and dandelion until the witch hazel is in bloom, we have it in variety of shades; and we need all the illumination that this opulent color can give us. Sometimes they are but shallow cups which garner the golden light, like the cinque-foil and the inconspicuous lady's sorrel, but they brim and beam with it. The warm, glad sun-color — so much of it! — in the commonest things; delicate gold of purest quality in the despised mullein; deep yellow gold in the celandine; red gold in the solid corymbed heads of tansy; petals of beaten, burnished gold, like the costly work for the temple in the buttercup — with what a polish it shines! All the golds that goldsmiths know are in the flowers of the field and the wayside flowers. Saffron yellow in the loose strife and the St. John's worts and St. Peter's worts and rock rose tribe; daffodil yellow in the evening primrose and toad-flax; gamboge, coarse, but gorgeous, in the rayed-out elecampane, and in those purple-eyed daisies

IN THE WILD AND WINDY TWILIGHT.

which make a field where they grow look as if it was lighted with candles.

## WILD PLACES.

If one would know wild flowers it is necessary sometimes to go to wild places. There is a ledgy hillside which is as gay in autumn as a garden of the tropics with shining beds of fern, and the changing sumach and wild cherry blazing like an oriflamme, where the mountain currant trails its leaves of the color of wine when it is red within the cup. Down over it, along the zigzag lines of shrunken water-courses, are lines of thicket, dark, dank and tangled with brambles — the veriest jungles, where the heaven above you is shut out, and the ground beneath is now oozy with moisture, now treacherous with slippery stones. That was one of our haunts; and after nearly every other flower had gone, it was possible to find a blossom of the rich, rose-like flowering raspberry, and perhaps one or two of the unique and fine-flavored berries. Once, in November, even after there had been a light fall of snow, we traversed the roughest of cart-paths and found an herb Robert in bloom, in the fissures of a rock among the shield ferns, just the kind of place where, earlier, we were sure of the jaunty little corydalis of the gayly painted

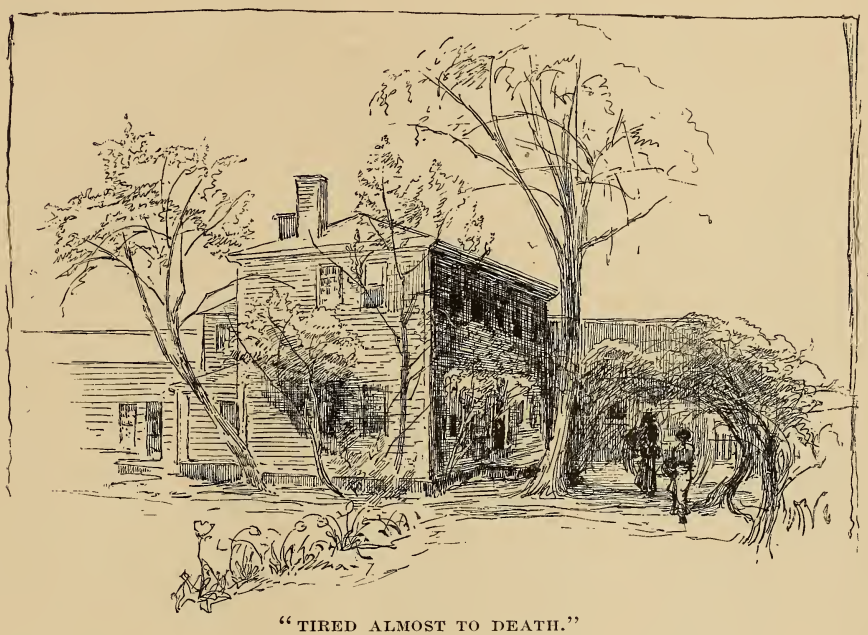
drops, and bluish, rue-like leaves; and as we came down in the wild and windy twilight we plucked the last of the asters.

We knew that rough, break-neck place like our own door-yard. It was a tedious jaunt to go up by that old, gullied road, which we had to do in order to strike out to the head of one of the ravines. And though every time while we were stopping on our way up and resting under the gnarly yellow birch, we sat and gazed away with eyes that never tired of it, at the bold, blue peak of Kearsarge, which made the northern background, and declared it was a sight so inspiring that we would soon come again, we had abundant reason for changing our minds after we had had an hour of climbing and slipping, and then pressing our way down through the dreadful thickets that awaited us. After all *that*, we found our zeal materially flagging in sympathy with our lagging feet; we were not as enthusiastic on the downward as we were on the ascending way, so that every time we came home, tired almost to death, we as positively declared that we would never do it again.

And before the week was out we were back up there, going over the same ground, and coming home with our arms full of things — mostly things with berries. I never saw so many kinds in one spot as we used to find there; cornels,

THAT OLD GULLIED ROAD.

elders and viburnums; "pigeon-plums;" the swinging, blue-green peas of the large Solomon's seal; snowy white cohosh



"TIRED ALMOST TO DEATH."

on stems like red coral; burning cone of Jack-in-the-pulpit; fiery scarlet of the black alder; lucent crimson of the two-leaved Solomon's seal; ruddy apples of the hobble-bush; velvety seed-heads of the stag-horn sumach.

In a bog away up on the hill were some cat-tails on stalks four feet long; polypod ferns of shining green were in great luxuriance in the woods; bleached ferns; sensitive ferns, turning all shades of brown, sea-green and purple, running

into each other; gigantic cinnamon ferns, the Anaks of their kind; and the superb Osmunda, with its pinnated leaves—"that tall fern" which Wordsworth so admired as

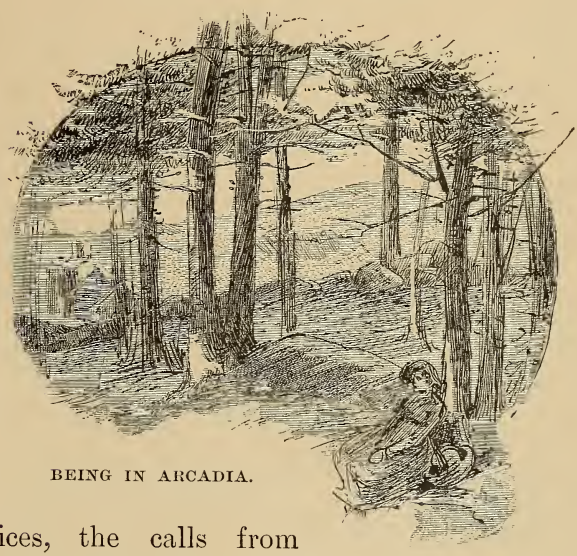
"So stately, of the queen Osmunda named."

## WITCH HAZEL.

Another autumn haunt was a wood from which much of the underbrush had been removed. It was like being in Arcadia; or as if Arcadia might be where that tranquil landscape in the distance could be seen through the vistas, with the blue mountain peak filling all the farther horizon. Through this forest dim wound many footpaths, wandering off anywhere, and then apparently ceasing. They had been worn by the hand-sled in winter and some sort of drag in summer, on

"OF THE QUEEN OSMUNDA NAMED."

which the man who had gathered up the fallen branches had conveyed his load away. Now nobody appeared to traverse them but ourselves. In there we seemed as much away from the world as if we had been on Selkirk's island. The village was just below, almost within speaking distance; yet all the sounds of wheels in the streets, the voices, the calls from animals and the barn-yard fowls, came to us as from a far country.

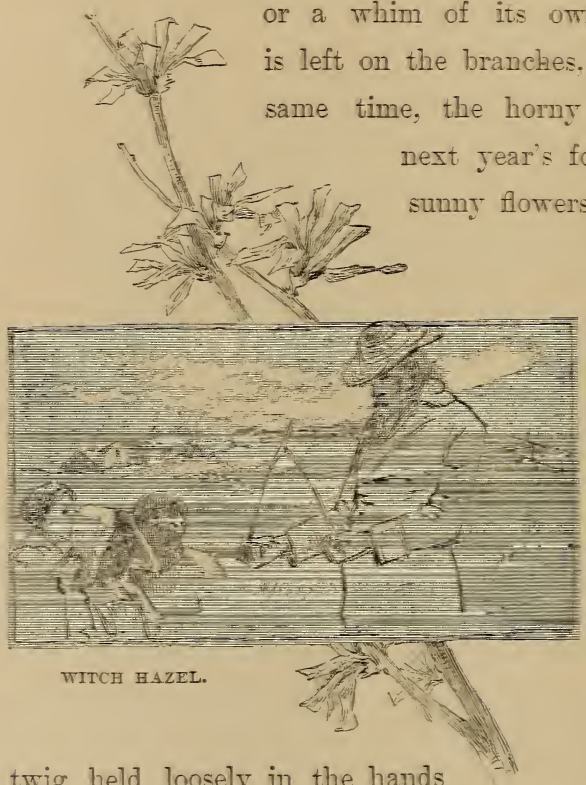


BEING IN ARCADIA.

It was pure delight on those Indian summer days which sometimes came in November, to saunter along over the soft brown mould, or over slopes russet-colored with the fallen needles of the pine, slippery to the feet, and soft as if one was walking on velvet. The only hint that flowers had ever been there was a group of blackened Indian pipes which we came upon now and then, forlorn wrecks of what had once been beautiful.

But down on the outskirts — we should pass them — were

the last flowers of the year, witch hazel. We should *not* pass them; we should stop and gather them; linger long and inhale their fragrance; bear branches of them home. I own to a great fondness for this odd bush. I like its picturesque, original ways. It does everything after a plan, or a whim of its own. When not a leaf is left on the branches, it shows, all at the same time, the horny nuts, the buds for next year's foliage, and flowers — sunny flowers all a-flutter.



WITCH HAZEL.

I have no faith in the traditions that a twig of it, used as divining-rod, will reveal a place where gold is hidden in the earth; but I am not so confident about the water tradition — that a twig held loosely in the hands of a man who is the right man, will turn over of itself when he comes where there is a spring down in the ground.

We used to hear about such a man (there seemed to have

been only one in the vicinity with this gift of uncanny craft), and I distinctly remember having seen him at his conjuring work, if I may call it so. He appears before my mental vision now, projected against the obscure background of a very long time ago. He was walking slowly, in silence, his eyes cast down, with the rod of witch hazel (forked, I think) carried in front of him. He had been sent for by somebody who purposed digging a well, but did not know where he was sure of striking water.

I do not know when it was, or where it was, or who the man was who wanted the well, or the name of him who bore the hazel rod. Neither do I know the result. But so much that I have told, one among a group of wondering children saw, and has never forgotten.

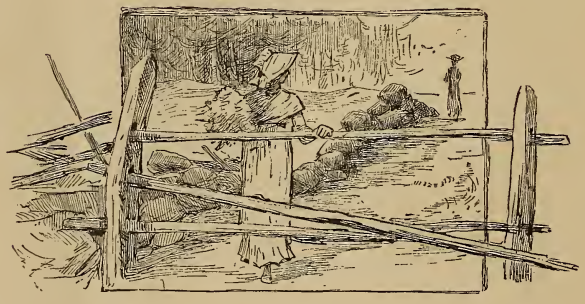
The smell of the flowers delights me; perhaps it really bewitches; perhaps there is sorcery in it, for the bush is mystic — an eerie thing. At any rate it is peculiar and distinctive. Nobody would ever mistake it, for it is like nothing else in the world; reminds one of nothing else. It is as individual as camphor, or ginger, or cloves, or sandal-wood. It is as penetrating as any of the strange, pungent gums and drugs of the Orient. The November air is full of it at nightfall, and you feel it as you do dampness.

The witch hazel flower is the last: the floral year, which

began with the morning flush of the arbutus, goes out in sunset color; and

> "— in the season's saddest hour
> To skies that weep and winds that wail,
> Its glad surprisals never fail."

When I perceive it on my late strolls, and see the "tawny gold," as Whittier calls it, of the lingering petals, I know what it all means. It means that the time of flowers is over; the procession has all passed by, there is nothing more to be seen.



WILD
FLOWERS

# WILD FLOWERS

## AND WHERE THEY GROW

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